

## Forum on New Approaches to Protracted Forced Displacement

Wilton Park, United Kingdom, 4-6 April 2016

### Co-Hosts Summary Statement

1. 2016 offers an unprecedented opportunity to achieve lasting change in international approaches to protracted displacement. Forced displacement is arguably one of the defining humanitarian and development challenges of our time. We agreed that bold action is needed to bring real change to the lives of refugees, internally displaced persons and the communities that host them.
2. Forced displacement is a symptom of conflict, persecution, human rights abuses and other failures of governance and the rule of law; the current trends are deeply troubling. In 2014, more than 15.5 million people left their homes in search of protection and safety. This is equivalent to an average of more than 42,500 people each and every day of the year. Once people leave their homes, they are often displaced for decades.
3. Even as displacement becomes increasingly protracted, humanitarian response continues to operate according to a short-term time horizon. Humanitarian assistance saves lives, but without the perspective, planning or resourcing needed to make it an investment in the future. Development, on the other hand, most often focuses only on nationals and excludes consideration of the refugees living in their midst, and internally displaced people are often similarly ignored.
4. Nearly half of the world's forcibly displaced people are children. Millions are out of school. Investing in youth and education is crucial. Failing the children and youth risks creating a lost generation and sets us on a path toward new conflicts and greater displacement in the future.
5. Recognising both the challenges and the opportunities, the World Bank Group, the Government of the United Kingdom and the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convened a Forum to build consensus on the need for a new approach to protracted forced displacement, to share practical experiences and identify ways to work together in the interest of refugees, internally displaced people and the communities that host them.
6. While the discussion focused on response once a crisis has occurred, the starting point was the recognition that much more needs to be done on prevention and preparedness and to address the root causes of conflict, including through more effective security and diplomatic efforts.

7. Host governments have been responding to the challenge for decades. A number of these countries have changed domestic laws and policies with a view to achieving better development outcomes for refugee and host communities alike, even in the face of political and national security challenges. These include the right of refugees to freedom of movement, the rights to seek employment, acquire housing and land, and to access national services for health and education. Others are partnering with the private sector to stimulate production, create jobs and increase access to financial services.
8. Many international humanitarian and development partners are pursuing adapted approaches and collaborating in new ways to address the challenges of protracted forced displacement and provide better support to governments. Much more needs to be done however to achieve greater collaboration in assessment, planning, programming and financing.

## Core principles of a new approach

9. Delivering new approaches requires changing our mind set and attitudes, adapting our institutions and ways of working, building new partnerships and moving out of our comfort zone. This entails not only humanitarian and development partners working together differently but also collaborating with a broader range of international and regional peace and security actors and the private sector.
10. Humanitarians bring the capacity to act quickly and save lives; this must be valued and maintained. However, a continuum of protection must run from emergency response through to durable solutions. Development actors, including international financial institutions, bring a longer term perspective that focuses on sustainability and the prospect of more predictable financing. We can learn from each other and build upon each other's strengths.
11. Governments need to set their own development priorities and coordinate implementation. Support is needed at multiple levels to build and sustain government systems to deliver services to the displaced and also to better prepare and respond in the event of future crises.
12. The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** pledge that '**no one will be left behind**' - adopted by 193 Member States of the United Nations - provides the fundamental platform for our approach. Building on the work of the **Solutions Alliance**, reflecting the directions of the **High Level Panel Report on Humanitarian Financing**, the **Secretary General's Agenda for Humanity** and **World Humanitarian Summit**, and the **AU Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness** the Forum discussions advanced our common thinking on new approaches.
13. From the Forum deliberations, five core principles emerged – the **Wilton Park Principles** – that serve as the foundation of a new approach to protracted forced displacement. The Wilton Park Principles have global relevance and must be implemented together and in a mutually reinforcing manner.

## **I. Work through national and local systems**

- 14.** Rapid, agile and effective humanitarian response – at times working through parallel systems - will continue to be essential to ensure protection and save lives. Planning and acting to strengthen national and local systems for the longer term should nevertheless start as early as possible. This is essential to manage and respond better to current needs, be resilient to future shocks and crises and ensure sustainability. However, efforts to strengthen national and local systems must take into account the context and dynamics of conflict, particularly in situations of internal displacement.
- 15.** The objective is to work more effectively, efficiently and sustainably and not simply to shift burdens to host governments. Working through national and local systems can also ensure investments in service delivery achieve equitable access and equal standards for host communities, refugees and internally displaced people. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will have a critical role to play. The Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing notes that only 0.2% of reported humanitarian funding is channelled directly to local and national NGOs. This needs to change. International and local actors need to adopt an approach that meets the needs of the whole population in a comprehensive way that is sensitive to specific needs and vulnerabilities.
- 16.** The Forum participants were encouraged by the inclusion of refugee children in national schools in Pakistan, Lebanon and other host countries. These examples of good practice need to be supported, documented and replicated elsewhere.

## **II. Support host communities and build social cohesion**

- 17.** Support to host communities and building social cohesion are crucial. The voices of the people most affected must inform and be at the centre of planning and action. Host communities are the first to absorb the shocks of a major influx of refugees or internally-displaced people, and they demonstrate tremendous generosity. In both rural and urban settings however, local people often experience competition for economic opportunities, increased cost of basic necessities and decreased access to basic services. This leads to social strains and, at times, conflict.
- 18.** Leadership – political, religious, business, social and traditional – plays an essential role in defining how host communities respond to these shocks and overcome them. Engaging with youth also an investment in leadership for the future. Bringing host communities and refugees or internally displaced people together – based upon a common vision for the development of an area or region – can also be a powerful vehicle for building social cohesion.
- 19.** During the Forum, we learned more about the innovative and inclusive approaches being pursued by some governments – such as the development planning that incorporates refugees and host communities, as seen in Uganda's new National Development Plan II (NDP II), the Turkana County development plan in Kenya and Pakistan's longstanding Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme in Pakistan. These innovative examples show the way

toward building social cohesion by creating a sense of common interest among host and displaced communities.

### **III. Enable economic participation and stimulate growth**

- 20.** Refugees and internally displaced people bring tenacity, knowledge, skills and abilities to the communities in which they live. They should not be seen as the passive recipients of humanitarian assistance, but rather should be seen as agents with the human capital to build their own future and contribute to national development and growth.
- 21.** Economic participation allows people to regain their dignity and independence, and enables them to live more normal lives in their host communities. The positive outcomes can include reduced strains on government resources and the need for external support over time. Refugees and internally displaced people need to retain or develop skills and assets to be self-reliant and better prepare for solutions whichever forms they take, including returning home.
- 22.** Economic participation for refugees resonated as an important core principle with the Forum participants, who nevertheless appreciated that such strategies cannot be pursued at any cost. They must be based on a sound socio-economic analysis of the context. The Forum highlighted the importance of being creative and pursuing non-aid strategies, such as trade concessions to expand economic opportunities for all.
- 23.** The Forum participants welcomed the positive approach to refugee employment reported in some major host countries. A significant development is Jordan's plan for a Special Economic Zone, where Syrian refugees and Jordanian nationals will work side-by-side in new businesses built with regional investment attracted by potential for access to the European Union market. The plan to create jobs for Syrian refugees and Lebanese workers through the Subsidised Temporary Employment Programme (STEP) in Lebanon is another encouraging example.

### **IV. Provide impactful and innovative financing**

- 24.** Humanitarian aid and official development assistance is not keeping pace with growing needs. New and innovative forms of financing must be identified. This will include leveraging the balance sheets of the multilateral development banks to provide a low-cost source of finance and stimulate private sector investment.
- 25.** Increasing the overall volume of financing is not enough. Greater predictability is also crucial. We can learn from insurance-based approaches to financing risk, which emphasize the importance of agreeing in advance who is responsible for different costs and ensuring that adequate financing is available to meet them. Discussions are currently underway on the replenishment of the multilateral development banks, which takes place every five years, and will provide an important opportunity to agree a better approach to financing in protracted crises.

26. The World Bank is exploring a MENA Concessional Financing Facility. This would include blending grants from supporting countries with loans from multilateral development banks to bring down the cost of financing to more concessional levels, not usually accessed by middle income countries. The equivalent financing is accessed by developing countries through the IDA concessional window.
27. Finally, we must ensure that we are using existing financing efficiently, including through the greater use of national social safety nets, including cash transfers. Cash transfers, linked to biometric registration have proven to be a powerful tool for protecting and assisting refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya and other countries, where they provide a stimulus to the local economy.

## **V. Improve the data and evidence base**

28. Making the case for a new approach requires much better evidence. We must better understand the costs and benefits of including refugees and internally displaced people in national development plans, as well as the impacts of their economic participation on host communities and the wider economy. More evidence is needed about which interventions work and at what cost. The value of improved evidence was shown by the impact that evidence and analysis made in supporting the negotiation of COP21 on climate change.
29. Greater understanding is needed regarding the scale and dynamics of forced displacement. We must know more about the profile of relevant populations, including their demographic characteristics, skills and aspirations. Policy and practice in this area should draw upon national and local government capacities and data sources and put communities at the heart of planning.
30. Working together demands that our assessments, planning and action are also based on shared data, to support better analysis and inform joint priorities and the results and collective outcomes to be achieved. Combining forces and building upon complementary strengths is part of the way forward.
31. Leveraging new and existing data platforms, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and national census processes, strengthening capacity for information collection at the national level to expand the available data will also be important. The data revolution creates new opportunities but also challenges. Data collection and management needs to be strengthened with a clearer set of standards and protocols, greater commitment to responsible governance and open data.
32. The potential for collaboration is shown by an important recent study of poverty and welfare among Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, which combined rich existing registration data with sophisticated modelling and analysis to inform humanitarian and development programming and response, including strategies for the targeting of assistance.

## Conclusion

33. We have a historic opportunity to deliver change for refugees, internally displaced persons and the communities that host them. The Forum recognised the importance of moving forwards in practical concrete ways at the country level, including through such platforms such as Solutions Alliance. Delivering lasting impacts will require policy coherence and consistency across the international community and mutual accountability for results.
34. Humanitarian and development actors also need to change, making internal adaptations and working through their respective governing boards and global processes, such as the United Nations Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). The Grand Bargain discussion also provides an important opportunity to drive forward greater efficiency, transparency and mutual accountability.
35. The World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and the UN summit on refugees and migrants and the Leader's Summit on refugees being convened by the United States President, both in September 2016, will provide an opportunity to take the Wilton Park Principles forward, form the partnerships and coalition and make the commitments needed for new approaches to protracted forced displacement to move from rhetoric to reality.
36. We must seize the once in a generation opportunity for the global community to take bold action to better serve those most left behind as a result of conflict, extreme poverty and environmental change.

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