



GP2.0 Spring Meeting
Enhancing Nationally Owned Accountability and Inclusion on Displacement Solutions
Wednesday, 26 May 2021
SUMMARY

Introduction

The GP2.0 Spring Meeting has investigated how processes of accountability help successful local integration, return, and resettlement of internally displaced persons. The Meeting aimed to draw attention to the centrality of accountability, inclusion and gender equality as principles that support and define the social contract between internally displaced persons, communities and governments. This is necessary for the prevention of forced displacement, for durable solutions and ultimately for sustainable development.

The event also reiterated how inclusive and accountable policy processes, led and informed by IDPs as their primary partners, are essential to advance reforms in transformative sectors such as disaster risk reduction, urban development, and housing. Public demands for reforms to prevent, address and resolve protracted mass internal displacement are necessary to push national and local governments to create the institutional infrastructure to implement a durable solutions agenda. The debate highlighted how this process is essential both for the implementation of Government led crisis responses, as well as for the formulation and revision of already existing policy frameworks.

Realising accountability between citizens and governments, requires partnerships that hinge on the agency of displaced men and women. It may also warrant a change in the crisis response models adopted by international partners, who should opt to support decentralization and localization through local authorities, and local civil society.

This was the first GP2.0 event of the year. It had 204 viewers and over 188 invitees registered. Attendees included members of the donor community, UN entities, non-governmental organizations, governments, think tanks and civil society.

Key messages

1. Accountability towards IDPs, and ultimately sustainable reintegration, begins with acknowledging that only persons who have experienced forced displacement in their lifetime have the full understanding of their situations, needs, and aspirations. Consultations with IDPs should not be limited to understanding their needs immediately after displacement. Their long-term aspiration should also be understood, in order to design holistic interventions aimed at supporting their autonomy to rebuild a life and a livelihood. Inclusive integration processes are central, especially in the early phases of displacement in order to create pathways for resilience and trauma healing. The well-being of an IDP is the first foundation for their agency.
2. Internally displaced persons can leverage the strength of their identities and community network as part of their engagement strategy to demand accountability from authorities. Digital literacy, negotiation skills, media and social media engagement are all key elements to ensure the participation of IDPs in public affairs. Last but not least, IDPs should gain knowledge and understanding of the mechanics of elective politics in order for them to vote and run for office.
3. Policies informed by migrants and internally displaced persons were more successfully implemented. Cooperation between authorities and displaced groups tends to occur when both parties feel that their concerns are genuinely heard and understood. Policies that are inclusive and intersectional tend to be designed holistically, and they are better versed to respond to a variety of needs, increasing the quality of services delivered. In both crisis and non-crisis situations, the Government plays a key quality

assurance role for service delivery, as exemplified by the experience of the Village HealthCare Worker Programme in Nigeria, and also by the set-up of the Grievance and Redress mechanism for crisis response in Pakistan.

4. IDPs, communities, civil society, international and local humanitarian, peace and development actors, as well as human rights monitors, remain key custodians of accountability, measuring and monitoring its effective implementation. Supporting local social capital is instrumental in the management and transformation of displacement crises, as demonstrated by the role played in Indonesia by local CSOs in both conflict and tsunami related displacement.
5. Displacement dynamics associated with natural disasters differ from those at play in a complex emergency. A whole of system accountability that hinges on Government leadership in the response, benefits from trusted and fully financed Government institutions. This facilitates exchanges with the international community.
6. Successful management and implementation of displacement rests on policy implementation. Policies may be designed and supported by the central government but they must be implemented by local actors. A whole of government approach should be inter-ministerial and involve various tiers of Government and cannot be dissociated from a whole-of-society approach. This furthers accountability and it is a lesson learned by the international community.

Opening remarks by Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs.

The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs opened the event noting that GP2.0 represents a new collaborative chapter for the protection of internally displaced persons, for prevention of internal displacement and for durable solutions. Ms. Jimenez-Damary highlighted that accountability is not only essential but urgently needed to successfully support durable solutions. As a foundational element of the social contract between the State and its citizens, accountability implies that governments are primarily responsible for the protection of IDPs. The state legal obligations towards displaced populations substantiate the thrust of international instruments that support both durable solutions and sustainable development. The Special Rapporteur pointed out that IDPs, communities, civil society, international humanitarian, peace and development actors, and independent monitors are essential for measuring and monitoring accountability practices.

Recommendations by Ms. Elisa Tembe, Psychologist at Doctors with Africa CUAMM

Ms. Elisa Tembe gave a key note speech drawing on her own experience of displacement. Noting that her extended family was instrumental in facilitating her adaptation in the various locations where she was temporarily hosted, she chose to put her psychology training and skills to the service of persons experiences situations of forced displacement. Ms. Tembe reiterated the importance of the support from host communities in speeding up process of resilience and psychosocial recovery for the displaced. She also emphasised the need for government authorities to ensure appropriate standards of care and assistance in temporary centres. Governments should also always consult displaced populations on their preferences for resettlement. Support from aid agencies should not only focus on the immediate needs of the displaced, but it should include measures that enable them to gain the autonomy to carry out activities that sustain their lives and families. Finally, making safe and secure land available is a priority in the short, medium and long term, whilst government and partners work to end violence which prevents displaced persons from returning home.

Country presentations

The session was moderated by George Conway, Deputy Director of the Crisis Bureau in UNDP and panelists were asked to reply to specific questions on internal displacement.

Agency, Inclusion and Accountability – IDPs and civil society shaping durable solutions

Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University, Bangladesh.

How do you think IDPs can better influence the shift from policies that focus mostly on infrastructure and housing, to more holistic policies that promote accountability in service delivery systems?

Dr. Siddiqui replied that it is possible to attain SDG 11 on safe and sustainable cities as long as there is inclusion and a whole of society approach. The invisibility of the displaced populations becomes evident when cities lack sustainability and people do not have a voice. During a research project led by Dr. Siddiqui, the team engaged both policy makers and displaced communities in an exercise aimed at documenting through photography their challenges related to urban development. Initially policy makers associated displaced persons with war and crime. Displaced communities on the other hand lamented their precarious situation in the city, and the lack of opportunities to engage with policy makers on addressing and resolving challenges that affected the areas in which they lived. The dialogue between authorities and displaced communities lasted 18 months. When the city of Chattogram updated its masterplan, policy makers began to incorporate the perspectives of displaced persons.

Dr. Siddiqui concluded by saying that it is important to create a space for a deliberative process where both authorities and displaced communities can voice and understand their respective concerns. Displaced communities are not a homogeneous group. Gender, sex, age, status, identities, geographic location need to be taken into account in these processes. Urban development policies cease to be only about infrastructure when the diversity and needs of these groups are taken into account.

Dr. Susan Okonkwo, Founder of Mwada Gana Foundation in Borno State, Nigeria.

In your experience providing healthcare for women and children in displacement, can you give some good examples of how and where IDPs were able to make their voices known? Who was there to listen, and respond?

Dr. Okonkwo mentioned that her experience as a gynecologist and her drive to serve the underprivileged are behind the establishment of the foundation and her work in Borno State, Nigeria. The Village Healthcare Worker Programme, implemented in partnership with the Women's Refugee Commission and the Ministry for State Primary Care Development Agency, has enabled thousands of women and children, both internally displaced and in the host communities, to access healthcare, and gain awareness. The platform set up by the Village Healthcare Worker Programme has given women, children and adolescents a voice. The knowledge shared by the Foundation on health and nutrition benefits the targets that receive the health service, and the volunteers who are trained to reach out to them.

Dr. Okonkwo recommended that this type of programme be implemented in other regions and countries. The model of consortium organizations is highly replicable, and it is important to partner up with a government entity that can monitor and measure the impact of the service provided. Accountability comes from that, and from listening to the voices of people the foundation serves.

Ms. Samira Gutoc, IDP Rights Activist, Marawi, Philippines.

What are the ways in which IDPs can engage in public affairs and how can they influence policy making?

Ms. Samira Gutoc pointed out that that marginalized communities such as internally displaced groups are not prominent in the public domain. It is important for them to leverage their communal networks in order to get engaged. The experience of the Marawi conflict demonstrated IDPs' capacity to take a seat at the decision makers' table and get involved in the peace processes. IDP voices should also be included in media coverage.

Coverage of government officials or of military opinions can overshadow important issues such as forced displacement and forced disappearances that require urgent media attention. In Marawi, Ms. Gutoc and other IDP representatives, agreed with the media that they would visit IDP camps every time that they passed by government offices. Looking at camp management, supporting digital literacy is an effective way to generate IDP engagement, creating additional options for IDPs to voice issues and concerns to the local authorities. The final cornerstone of accountability towards IDPs is set when IDPs can participate in electoral processes, and when protection platforms are represented in Congress. The fourth anniversary of the siege of Marawi is an opportunity to commemorate the fact that it is possible to bring global media attention to the issues afflicting internally displaced persons. It is crucial that IDPs tell their own story to the world.

Dr. Saiful Mahdi, University Syiah Kuala and International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies, Indonesia.

How did these issues play out with respect to internal displacement in the response to the Tsunami, and were there any good practices in terms of systems of accountability towards displaced populations generated as a result?

Mr. Mahdi's drew his main points from his experience working with displacement affected communities during the conflict in Aceh that preceded the Tsunami of 2004, and during the Tsunami crisis response. There are multiple types of displacement and displacement can be a recurring phenomenon. These trends are likely to increase, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to climate change. Echoing the words of Ms. Tembe, Mr. Mahdi pointed out the importance of the local economic and sociopolitical networks (social capital) during a displacement crisis. In recurring crises, displacement can become a survival strategy for IDPs if social capital networks are present and well supported. The mobility of IDPs can also become part of their resilience. During the Tsunami response, in spite of the efforts of international organizations and the creation of the Aceh-Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency, 70% of the persons internally displaced were hosted by local families in the host community. Local NGOs that begun their work prior to the Tsunami and were anchored in the community remained active in support of the displaced during the tsunami and beyond.

Dr. Mahdi recommended that national and international agencies understand the role played by acquaintances, friends and families of displaced persons. Even when displacement agencies are set-up, they cannot take care of the entirety of the populations affected by a disaster, and the social capital of displaced persons remains very important.

Accountability towards IDPs – the role of Governments and the International Community

Lieutenant-General Nadeem Ahmed (Retd), Former Director of the National Disaster Management Authority and Chairman of the Special Support Group for IDPs, Pakistan.

Did an inclusive approach to internal displacement contribute to strengthening accountability between different levels of government, including local and national?

General Nadeem Ahemd pointed out that the difference between complex and climate related crises lies with the security element. In conflict crises, the military can be seen as part of the problem but it can also be part of the solution. In natural disasters, this element is less salient. It is therefore important to understand the triggers and dynamics of displacement and then come up with a corresponding strategy. Secondly, the government structures that a country has in place determine the space for aid and humanitarian agencies to operate. The third reflection shared by Lieutenant General Ahmed dealt with community agency. Now more than ever, communities can engage directly with their governments and decision makers without resorting to intermediaries. When it comes to responding to displacement crises in Pakistan, the Government had a response organized across the various tiers of Government contributing to a whole-of-system accountability. The military, the international cluster system, the provincial authorities and the elected bodies had reporting channels. At local level a Grievance and Redress mechanism was tasked to report and resolve issues raised by

the communities. Thousands of complaints were profiled and addressed at the area level. Media teams were in place to profile the reports from affected areas. Finally, the Military Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Committees were an important part of the accountability system and which were also receiving feedback on the policies measures implemented.

Internally displaced persons and persons affected by disasters were consulted during the policy formulation and implementation phase, having an opportunity to propose modifications. Successful policy implementation depended on a consultative policy design process, coordinated by the central government, and on policy implementation and enforcement led by local authorities. The international community and donor groups, together with government authorities would then ensure that reconstruction efforts remained on track.

Mr. Rufus Karanja Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Migration and Protection, East and Horn of Africa.

What specific recommendations does SDC have for international community when it comes to accountability towards displaced populations?

Mr. Karanja mentioned the Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) in Somalia launched in 2016 by the Federal Government of Somalia and the DSRSG/RC/HC. The DSI aimed to create a multistakeholder platform for development humanitarian and peace stakeholders. It also aimed at supporting the Government in leading the creation and implementation of durable solutions policies. SDC has facilitated the advisory function of Professor Walter Kälin, to the UN DSRSG/RC/HC, and it has supported coordination capacity in the Resident Coordinator's Office by deploying 5 experts over 5 years.

Three elements came out from the DSI evaluation: firstly, the element of government ownership and accountability is central for the success of durable solutions. Displacement should be addressed as a governance and developmental priority. As noted by Walter Kälin, accountability towards displaced affected communities depends on political will, and in Somalia accountability across tiers of government is especially relevant. Secondly, Somalia prioritized a Whole of Government Approach. In 2019 a National Durable Solutions Secretariat was established and from the standpoint of accountability it translated into having multiple line ministries responsible and accountable for the implementation of durable solutions. Coordination structures implementing a whole of government approach were also present at the regional/local level. Those local structures also included international community organizations thus reinforcing scrutiny. Thirdly, it is necessary to support accountability between displacement affected communities and authorities. Government authorities should have coordination capacity, and they should also be able to deliver services to displacement affected communities. Community action plan (CAP) exercises led by authorities brought together hosts and displaced persons in an exercise of priority setting for service delivery.

Questions and answers with the audience

The session was facilitated by Ms. Kerry Lynn Maze, Senior Migration and Crisis Analyst at IOM. Questions from the audience focused on accountability towards IDPs from the perspectives of security, peace building, women leadership, trauma healing and technology to drive durable solutions at scale.

With reference to displacement crises sparked by conflict, Ms. Tembe stressed that government responses focusing only on security are not sufficient to alleviate the situation experienced by persons in displacement. IDPs need to re-establish quickly prospects for viable livelihoods and regain freedom to make choices for their future.

Regarding issues of accountability towards IDPs in peacebuilding contexts, panelists highlighted the need to maintain a strong focus on preventing exclusion and marginalisation, which are both drivers of conflict and displacement. Safe spaces for IDP engagement in peacebuilding are crucial for policy processes, reconciliation

and forgiveness. The onus of accountability and participation in peacebuilding processes should not only be on communities. The government needs to prioritize internal displacement, human rights and community participation in public affairs. Finally, at the international level, tools such as Post Crisis Needs Assessments are practical tools that help governments reach out to their communities and adopt a holistic approach to reconstruction after conflict.

Trauma healing in displacement responses is a key priority. Trauma can hinder personal recovery, and therefore agency. It is important that camp managers and settlements offer psychosocial services. Policy makers need to understand that displacement is a highly traumatic event. Panelists pointed out that trauma experienced in the aftermath of a natural disaster may be different than the trauma experienced during conflict. The conflict dimension and the insecurity create a state of continued uncertainty regarding the possibility to return and go back to the life left behind after fleeing.

Finally, on harnessing the potential of IDPs for durable solutions at scale, panelists noted a disconnect between international programmes supporting those populations and the understanding of their needs. International donor reporting and requirements can overwhelm local civil society organizations, making their liaison with communities harder. Digital platforms and social media have given an opportunity to internally displaced persons to articulate publicly their needs in a way that helps filling the gap between external assistance interventions and local demands. They have also empowered agency of the IDPs and other communities. Crowdfunding initiatives to respond to displacement crises in countries like Somalia have mobilised quickly support from Somalis and diaspora living abroad.

Closing remarks by George Conway – Deputy Director of the Crisis Bureau – UNDP

George Conway concluded the session with four main takeaways from the discussion. Firstly, “only when displaced persons articulate the full experience of displacement, it can be acknowledged and genuine people-centered solutions be found.” Aspirations and needs need to be equally considered, while designing approaches that promote longer term inclusivity and equity, and expand choice and opportunity.

Secondly, a functioning social that includes the most vulnerable, is the key to successful national ownership. Whole-of-Government approaches that involve ministries but also various tiers of Government, cannot be separated from Whole-of-Society approaches. It is necessary to work together with civil society to advance social cohesion while upholding human rights and the rule of law, especially where justice and security concerns are more acute. Building a social contract that is fully reflective of displaced persons’ agency, and closes the gap between people and the state, requires deliberately making policy and fiscal choices that build social capital, deliver inclusive services, open up the civic space and develop pathways towards shared prosperity for all.

Thirdly, international partners need to purposefully support countries to strengthen national and local systems and approaches for accountability and inclusion, with an eye to decentralisation and localisation. This means working collectively, across the humanitarian-development-peace actions, prioritizing support and funding to local agencies, and supporting participatory and area-based programming at local levels with IDPs and host communities.

Finally, accountability and inclusion should aim to uproot persistent inequalities by tackling the structural discrimination and exclusion of specific groups. Governance measures such as increased social protection, education and health coverage are examples of systems that can help tackling inequalities. Equally fundamental is accelerating support to gender equality and women’s empowerment by strengthening IDP women leadership and agency.