



**GP2.0 Winter Event**  
**Addressing Internal Displacement: The Role of Cities**  
**Tuesday, 1 February 2022**  
(Click [HERE](#) for the recording of the event)

### **BACKGROUND**

This GP2.0 event was organized in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Joint Internal Displacement Profiling Service (JIPS), the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

336 participants attended the discussion, which brought together city authorities, humanitarian and development actors, as well as displacement-affected communities to discuss and share best practices on the active role of cities and local authorities in advancing prevention, protection and long-term development solutions in urban displacement contexts.

As highlighted in the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (henceforth High-Level Panel) [report](#), internal displacement has increasingly become an urban phenomenon. By 2050, 68% of world's population is expected to live in urban areas, making urbanization one of the twenty-first century's most transformative trends.<sup>1</sup> Already in 2018, more than 80% of internally displaced did not live in camps, but many of them in cities, in unplanned informal settlements and suffering from social and economic exclusion.<sup>2</sup> Conflict or disaster-induced displacement however cannot be solely seen as a humanitarian issue, particularly in cities. Key actors across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, must deliver on prevention and long-term solutions and consider the often complex urban systems in their responses.

### **KEY MESSAGES**

Cities are rich ecosystems that can help internally displaced persons overcome displacement-related vulnerabilities and regain their self-reliance. Urbanization can be a powerful driver of sustainable development. It is important that local authorities harness the full potential of urban development, while at the same time ensuring inclusive policies and processes are established to achieve protection and long-term development solutions for displacement-affected communities.

As international actors, the UN and other international stakeholders should gain an understanding of the constraints faced by local authorities when responding to internal displacement. International planning and financing should align with the agendas of local governments, to allow a coordinated use of international resources in line with local priorities and ensuring that investments don't build parallel structures, but foster social, economic and environmental development for all people in vulnerable situations.

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<sup>1</sup> [UNDESA, 2018](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Habitat III – Issue Paper on Migration and Displacement](#)

Participation of internally displaced persons and local communities in policy processes, urban planning, as well as in the design and implementation of projects, is a key element for the success and sustainability of these initiatives. National frameworks on internal displacement should guide and support coordination across the various tiers of government as well as the international actors supporting these entities, and provide sustainability to the work of local authorities.

Valid data and shared analysis are essential to achieve a common understanding of the impact of displacement on people, systems and sectors in cities, and to inform effective urban development plans and the implementation of participatory policies. Urban profiling, conducted through participatory processes for data collection and including local realities, is the first step for ensuring and enhancing local institutional leadership, coherent humanitarian and development responses, and inclusive and community-based planning, implementation and long-term ownership.

## **SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION**

This event was moderated by Ms. Safal Pavey, Senior Advisor at UNHCR, who highlighted the centrality of cities in providing services and protection to internally displaced persons. Cities are not only the backdrop where displacement happens, but they are a rich ecosystem which provide opportunities and services for the reintegration of displacement-affected communities.

### **Mr. Samuel Cheung, Chief of the IDP Section, UNHCR**

Mr. Cheung introduced GP2.0 as an informal community of experts that provides a forum for exchange of information and good practices on internal displacement. Established to maintain the momentum generated by the GP20 Plan of Action, GP2.0 is particularly relevant now, after the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel Report and the draft Action Agenda have called for collective action on durable solutions. In this framework, GP2.0 aspires to remain connected and engaged with local, national and regional fora, supporting them with learning, and providing a community of practice with the aim to better prevent, protect, and find solutions to internal displacement.

### **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

Ms. Sharif emphasized that the High-Level Panel Report and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) both recognize the magnitude and significance of urban displacement. The NUA focuses on policy and legal frameworks that foster non-discrimination and equality, at national, sub-national, and local levels. It emphasises the importance of local governments. It stresses the importance of participatory and integrated planning to address needs with long-term sustainable interventions, and it advocates for integrated financing frameworks and decentralization wherever possible. These priorities are aligned with the recommendations of the High-Level Panel Report, and it will be possible to harness the potential of urbanization not only to achieve sustainable development, but also offer IDPs protection and the possibility to become self-reliant.

### **Mr. Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, UNHCR**

Mr. Mazou emphasized that trends of urbanization and internal displacement have grown with similar patterns. The majority of internally displaced persons, who live in cities alongside host communities, benefit from the markets, infrastructure, jobs, and services cities offer. The trend of urbanization has been seen in places like Mogadishu, Somalia and Borno State, Nigeria. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) highlights the importance of working with local communities to support both refugees and IDPs. It calls on national and international communities to support municipalities and mayors, who alongside civil society organizations are usually first responders in supporting internally displaced persons. UNHCR works with cities to integrate IDPs into existing service delivery mechanisms, and to ensure they are taken into consideration across all facets of interventions, including the development and drafting of urban legislation, policies and regulations. These actions require work in synergy with development and peace actors.

### **Ms. Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director General, IOM**

Ms. Daniels noted that local authorities are at the forefront of the solutions to internal displacement. She stressed the need to harness the remarkable capacity of urban centers and local urban governments to respond to displacement in modern and sometimes revolutionary ways. Intersectoral coordination remains more challenging in dispersed urban areas than in rural areas. Urban areas also face the effects of natural disasters. Slums and other underserved locations are particularly vulnerable with structurally weaker habitats and less access to early warning systems. However, the tools, time, and resources necessary to tackle multi-layered hazards and underlying vulnerabilities are often absent from humanitarian interventions, and therefore collaboration across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is a necessary step in preventing and resolving crises. Cities are facing an ever-growing funding gap due to COVID-19. However, IDPs can be part of broader poverty reduction initiatives and approaches. To do this, it is necessary for UN entities to work together and empower local authorities and cities to establish effective and coherent governance frameworks.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

**Moderator:** What have been some of the most pressing issues faced by your cities and could you share some best practices related to, for example, securing housing or other services such as health and education for IDPs in urban areas?

### Ms. Joy Belmonte, Mayor of Quezon City, Philippines

Ms. Belmonte highlighted the challenges of homelessness and informal settlements that affect communities who have been migrating for years from rural areas to the city. Triggers of displacement have been natural disasters, but also poverty, conflict and intercommunal violence. To address the needs of the displaced communities, the city established the Bangsamoro Affair Service, which comprises recognized leaders of different Muslim communities. Its mandate is to aid the city and ensure the rights and well-being of the Bangsamoro people, and to facilitate the process of social integration and cohesion. The council ensures that the city's social welfare services reach Muslim communities and that they continue to live in harmony without religious discrimination.

The city has intensified its social housing program. The current shelter plan has targeted security of tenure for at least 17,000 informal settler families from June 2019 to June 2022. Another intervention through the housing department is the Relocation and Resettlement program which is specifically directed at IDPs. The program prioritizes the relocation of families living near waterways and other danger zones to safer and secure housing locations. A community mortgage program has enabled displaced and urban poor to acquire land tenure security. A rental housing scheme has supported thousands of families who could not buy a house, and the municipality has built 5,135 units for this purpose. All of these programs are institutionalized by legislation and strong policies crafted by the City Council. The sustainability of Quezon City's housing program is reinforced by programs on health and social services, livelihood and employment, and environmental action.

### Mr. Oleksander, Mayor of Kramatorsk, Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine<sup>3</sup>

Kramatorsk is one of the first cities in Ukraine which started to host IDPs beginning in 2014. The majority of IDPs need material, legal, and social assistance, as well as housing. In order to ensure the rights of IDPs, a special program of social protection and support for IDPs will be developed and implemented in the next three years. The activities of the program are financed from state, regional and local budgets.

The municipality in collaboration with IOM has created a housing program that has partially addressed the issue of temporary accommodation and resettlement of registered IDPs in the city, and has enabled IDPs to access improved facilities equipped with sanitary facilities and basic necessities. The Kramatorsk territorial community is cooperating with the Council of Europe on the project named "Internal Movement in Ukraine." This initiative targets persons internally displaced by the conflict and promotes integration with the local

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<sup>3</sup> The situation described below and related figure might have changed since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

community. The project aims to improve social services, mainstream gender in local policies, raise awareness of housing opportunities, provide legal aid, and implement digital tools for IDP services, among others.

#### Lilia Umana Montiel, former Deputy Mayor, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

San Pedro Sula hosts nearly 1.3 million people. The city has 20 districts that are similar in terms of resources management. Approximately 50% of these districts have neighborhoods where people have been evicted. The City Council developed a 20-year master plan, to promote different pathways to sustainable urban development. It is important to enable access to housing, health and education services, and create real opportunities in terms of sustainable economic development, and socio-economic reinsertion into the job market. A state level agenda has been developed to deal with these issues. The municipality is trying to create spaces for IDP reintegration and encourage meaningful IDP participation. Engaging with the private sector is key to make sure that IDPs, who are typically excluded from the traditional labor market, have job/income opportunities. Integrating the development agenda with the municipal agenda is key to optimizing resources invested in city development. Turnover in government authorities is particularly challenging when it comes to continuity in budget allocations, planning and ensuring the participation of IDPs in municipal programmes.

#### Mireia Vilar Forner, UN Resident Coordinator, Colombia

Ms. Mireia Vilar Forner stressed the importance of the UN Country Team in supporting the actions that national and local authorities in Colombia have undertaken to tackle internal displacement and promote development solutions.

Emergency response mechanisms in cities can be used for IDP needs. The international community has also worked with the Constitutional Court, the Ombudsman Office, and the Inspector General's Office, to document the level of efficiency in the implementation of IDP policies, and this has led to a relevant body of jurisprudence which resulted in the 2011 Victims Law. This was an important legal framework that clarified the roles and responsibilities that both the national and the local institutions have towards IDPs. The international community and UNCT can play a role in raising awareness and ensuring that institutional frameworks, budgets, and legislation are put forward.

The early engagement with local authorities also creates an understanding of the impact that displaced populations will have on the territorial development of cities. In Bogota and Medellin, local authorities have adjusted their programs to take advantage of the broad cultural diversity and capacities that IDPs bring to host communities. In Cali and Bogota, local authorities are working with the Chambers of Commerce and the private sector to facilitate vocational training and job placement, as well as to support access to microcredit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are owned by IDPs. Additionally, Colombia is now regularizing 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees, one of the largest migrant and refugee integration efforts worldwide. There is a large innovation space to promote public policy and private sector collaboration, particularly for job and entrepreneurial inclusion with local authorities.

#### Intervention from IDP and local authority representatives from Sudan

The video featured the testimonies of Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim, Chair of the Higher Committee for IDPs in East Darfur, and Mr. Abdul Alhassan, Head of the Planning and Development unit of the Ministry of Finance.

- Mr. Ibrahim is an IDP and chairs the Higher Committee for IDPs in East Darfur. The Higher Committee for IDPs seeks to actively engage in activities that help IDPs reach durable solutions on local, state, and international levels. Participation of IDPs in decision making is foundational to the achievement of durable solutions and sustainable peace.
- Mr. Alhassan actively participated in the action planning workshops held in East Darfur, alongside international partners and IDP communities. He highlighted the centrality of collaboration among all partners and engagement with local communities and IDPs, as well as the importance of an evidence-based approach to devise informed program. in support of longer-term solutions and peacebuilding to internal displacement.

(Youtube video [Peacebuilding & Durable Solutions for Darfur's Displaced: Perspective from an Internally Displaced](#))

## **Q&A SESSION**

*Disclaimer: Mayor Goncharenko from Ukraine was no longer present during the Q&A part due to an emergency.*

The Q&A session focused on:

1. Collaboration between municipal and national authorities to address internal displacement challenges;
2. How the UN can support municipalities while consulting on and implementing the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement;
3. The four policy recommendations included in the joint submission by the International Institute for Environmental Development, JIPS and UN-Habitat to the UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement;
4. Localisation and acceleration of durable solutions;
5. How to mainstream gender in the response to internal displacement.

One of the main challenges listed by participants was the lack of support to municipalities from national governments. Cities hosting internally displaced persons also need to respond to the needs of host communities, in addition to those of the internally displaced. The international community should support coordination, and engage with national actors to advance budgetary decentralization, and the capacity of municipal authorities.

Partners reiterated the importance of directly supporting local authorities, particularly in the areas of technical assistance and capacity building for inclusive and cross-sectoral approaches. Municipalities also require support and increased capacity on how to include IDPs in developing solutions, with methodologies that are practical and simple, and also financial resources to implement them.

The consultations on the Action Agenda would be a great opportunity for local governments to learn from one another. The UN should support this dialogue drawing on the expertise and knowledge generated in countries affected by displacement.

Lucy Earle, Principal Researcher at the IIED, presented the four policy points on urban displacement: International partners should align their efforts with the agendas of municipal authorities. Improving data gathering and analysis is foundational to the development of appropriate urban policies. Donors and the UN should address the barriers between humanitarian and development funding, which create an artificial division and undermine the support that municipal authorities should receive to carry out sustainable interventions.

On the issue of localization, the panelists reiterated the importance of creating national agendas on displacement that clarify the modality of coordination with local authorities and that support decentralization policies. Panelists also emphasized the importance of joint planning between the international community, IDPs and municipalities.

On the question of gender, municipal authorities have set up a variety of mechanisms for the empowerment of women, including for victims of violence. These included training centers, technical education centers for children, the promotion of livelihood agendas for women, etc.

## **SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION**

Wilhelmina Welsch, Coordinator, Joint Internal Displacement Profiling Service (JIPS)

JIPS together with UN-Habitat and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have been putting the spotlight on the need for international actors to adopt new ways of thinking about municipal-level dynamics in urban internal displacement and related humanitarian and development responses. Effectively addressing displacement in urban areas requires a shared understanding of the situation and its impact on both people and places. [Recent research](#) showed that collaborative urban profiling has provided a shared knowledge base and critically supported the development of more equitable programs for more coherent humanitarian and development results, strengthened local leadership, and enhanced local systems and governance. The draft Action Agenda mentions urban profiling and the importance of a whole-of-society and participatory approach. The challenges of IDPs are acknowledged and will require working in partnership with local authorities, affected communities, and humanitarian and development actors. It is important to institutionalise collaboration with local authorities and recognize their leading role. Similarly, engagement with communities and IDPs must be stepped up.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Vittoria Zanuso, Executive Director, Mayors Migration Council (MMC)

Ms. Zanuso closed the event by reminding that the goal of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement was to shine light on this phenomenon. The interventions at the Winter Event showed that it is the mayors who carry that light, as they lead responses, often ahead of their national governments, and sometimes lacking the formal mandates and budgets to do so. Mayors need more resources. The High-Level Panel Report includes recommendations to provide funding as locally as possible and to establish a global fund for internal displacement solutions. Ms. Zanuso suggested to combine the two recommendations and create a global cities fund for solutions to internal displacement.