Internal Displacement in an Increasingly Urbanized World

Submission to the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

This submission is the result of consultations with municipal and regional authorities, as well as international experts. It provides findings and recommendations to better support local actors to address urban internal displacement.

1. Overview

1.1. Background

The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which started its work in February 2020, is tasked with elaborating recommendations to prevent, respond to and solve the world's internal displacement crises. The Panel has given special attention to internal displacement in the urban context because, while the exact percentage is not yet well established, a large and increasing proportion of internally displaced persons reside in urban areas. There is therefore a strong need to raise awareness around this issue and to provide guidance specifically tailored for better and more effective responses to and management of urban internal displacement contexts[1].

To work towards this end, in February 2021 the High-Level Panel's Secretariat launched a multi-stage initiative, in cooperation with its technical partners UN-Habitat, the Joint Internal Displacement Profiling Service (JIPS) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). This process, detailed below, builds on and complements an original set of recommendations[2] submitted to the High-Level Panel, which strongly argued for a reconceptualization of IDP movements to urban areas [3], "as an accelerated version of an inevitable and widespread trend towards urbanization," which demands tailored urban-oriented responses and the need to work more closely with those at the frontline of reception of most IDPs – municipal authorities" (Earle et al., 2020, p. 495).

1.2. Assessment Approach

The subsequent initiative launched by the Secretariat and these partners endeavoured to document good practices, ongoing challenges, and key recommendations in urban internal displacement management from a *municipal-level* perspective, helping give voice to the often-overlooked viewpoints of mayors and technical experts within municipalities on the front lines of displacement

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[1] For the purposes of this report, "urban internal displacement contexts" are conceived of as forced displacement from any areas of origin (either rural areas, other cities, or neighborhoods within the same city) *to* an urban center. The assessment process did not directly examine the causes of displacement *from* urban areas, nor the prevention efforts that might be undertaken to address such forced displacement. Similarly, the facilitation of voluntary returns (from urban areas to rural areas or to other cities) are considered as part of overall municipal responses to urban displacement, but are not the primary concern of report.

[2] For the original submission of recommendations, see Nunez-Ferrera *et al.* (2020)

[3] A complementary journal article was subsequently published. See Earle *et al.* (2020)

crises. The organization of six in-depth consultations[4] with key municipal authorities from urban areas that have been substantially affected by internal displacement[5] was at the heart of the undertaking.

The consultations took place between February and April 2021. The selected cities were chosen to ensure a range of different regional contexts, as well as displacement causes and durations. Other criteria included showcasing a broad range of development levels and robustness of governance systems. Box 1 below presents brief snapshots of each of the six case studies examined for the analysis.

Overview of Municipal Consultations Conducted

Country: Burkina Faso Cities: Kaya, Dori, Kongoussi, Tougouri (four municipalities in the Centre-Nord and Sahel Regions of Burkina Faso) Type of Displacement: armed conflict, inter-communal conflict Context: over 1.2 million IDPs have fled their homes since 2017. Secondary cities and towns have seen surges in displaced populations, sometimes equaling or even surpassing the size of the host community. Kaya's population of 166,000 has been augmented by over 100,000 IDPs, while Dori's population of 141,000 has increased by 42,000 IDPs. Consultation Participants: Mayors of each of the four municipalities	Country: Somalia City: Mogadishu Type of Displacement: Insecurity and natural disasters (in the form of floods and climate-change exacerbated droughts) Context: Out of 2.6 million IDPs in the country, over 800,000 IDPs are estimated to reside in Mogadishu, many of whom have been displaced for many years. Consultation Participants: Director and technical members of Mogadishu's Durable Solutions Unit (DSU) at the Benadir Regional Administration (BRA).	Country: Ukraine City/Region: Luhansk Oblast Type of Displacement: Conflict Context: The conflict in Eastern Ukraine is now in its seventh year, there are officially 1.4 million IDPs displaced from the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea. Over 280,000 of these IDPs are located in the Luhansk region, Consultation Participants: members of technical directorates of the Luhansk Regional Oblast and the Luhansk IDP Council
Country: Iraq City: Mosul Type of Displacement: armed conflict Context: Out of a total number of 1.2 million IDPs in the country, there are currently an estimated 96,000 IDPs in Mosul. As the second most populous city in Iraq and one of the most heavily affected urban centers of the conflict with ISIL. Consultation Participants: Mayor of Mosul	Country: Colombia City: Medellin Type of Displacement: armed conflict and generalized violence Context: Medellin has hosted an estimated 474,000 of Colombia's 8.2 Million IDPs since 1985. The city has been plagued by criminal organizations, including paramilitary and guerrilla groups and drug cartels, for several decades. Combined, these factors left the city among those with the	Country: Honduras City: San Pedro Sula Type of Displacement: generalized violence Context: Honduran society has been greatly affected by generalized violence leading to large scale displacement over the past several decades, with an estimated 247,000 IDPs in the country between 2004 and 2018. Located in Cortés, the Department hosting the highest amount of IDPs (27% of the total 2004-2018 figure), San Pedro Sula

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[4] Given COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, all exchanges were held virtually.
[5] In some cases, Mayors were the project team's primary interlocutors (Iraq and Burkina Faso), while other discussions were held with technical officials within local municipal administrative units (Ukraine, Medellin, Mogadishu). In San Pedro Sula, both the Vice Mayor and heads of administrative units were part of the consultation. In addition to the three partners, several organizations played key roles in organizing the exchanges: NRC in Ukraine, UNHCR in San Pedro Sula, and IOM and UN-Habitat in Iraq.

	highest rates of intra-urban displacement in the country. <u>Consultation Participants</u>: Members of the national-local coordination team and the Director of Ethnic Affairs at the National Victims Unit; Medellín's Deputy Secretary for Restorative Justice	is one of the most severely affected locales, falling within the top four municipalities most affected by internal displacement. <u>Consultation Participants</u>: Vice Mayor of San Pedro Sula; members of municipal technical units

The consultations confirmed many of the project teams' original research propositions, while providing additional insights into municipal leaders' views regarding internal displacement. The qualitative data collected during the consultations were combined with a rapid review of current literature to contextualize emerging findings from the process. Finally, a "Global Roundtable" with experts in areas of urban development and forced displacement—along with representatives from several of the cities consulted—was convened on 19 April 2021; this event offered the project team the opportunity to present initial propositions and findings and engage in active discussions with practitioners including municipal authorities, the UN system, international NGOs, donor representatives, civil society and academia.

1.3. Limitations

Several limitations to the assessment process should be noted. First, due to the tight timeline, only a handful of municipal cases were examined. While great effort was made to draw from experiences from cities and crises with diverse profiles, the sample is by no means representative of the myriad urban displacement contexts and the many ways municipalities have experienced and adapted to this challenge.

In addition, consultations were restricted to one two-hour discussion in each location, and only local government representatives were engaged. This meant that the information offered by participants could not be triangulated through discussions with affected populations (IDPs and host communities), national government representatives, local civil society, or members of the international community. The project team attempted to address these limitations by drawing on previous experiences of technical partners working in the selected cities and conducting a background desktop review of each local context.

2. Context

In an increasingly urbanizing world, internal displacement is destined to become a primarily urban phenomenon. While accurate data on the exact percentage of IDPs who choose to reside in cities and towns is not known, wide consensus holds that: most IDPs move to urban areas (Earle *et al.*, 2020, p. 495); internal displacement is often protracted in nature (Crawford *et al.*, 2015); and many IDPs will choose to remain in their areas of displacement (Crisp, Morris and Refstie, 2012, p. S25). Moreover, urban IDPs tend to settle in impoverished informal settlements (Pantuliano *et al.*, 2012; Sanyal, 2012; Darling, 2017) and are by definition citizens of the country, making dividing lines between IDPs and urban poor within the host communities in which they reside difficult to ascertain. At the same time, municipal authorities and service providers—particularly in lower-income and fragile states—are often woefully unprepared to respond to the influx of displaced households, amidst the many competing challenges and priorities they face. These include: rapid

urbanization rates resulting from regular demographic growth and rural-to-urban migration that are affecting developing country cities around the globe; the lack of financial and technical capacity to provide adequate basic services and affordable housing to their growing citizenry; structural problems reducing livelihoods opportunities and exacerbating extreme inequalities; national political discourses that downplay the phenomena and/or insist that IDPs will return to their areas of origin in a short amount of time; and budget allocations from national governments that are often not based on population figures inclusive of IDPs.

These trends have major—and insufficiently explored—implications for humanitarian and development responses in cities and towns. Unfortunately, both technical and financial partners have a long history of viewing forced displacement through a largely "rural" lens. Thanks to the work of a host of researchers, policy makers and humanitarian and development actors, this has begun to shift over the past decade. However, there is still a marked gap in understanding of, and tailored solutions for, tackling urban internal displacement, and a lack of actors sufficiently familiar with operating in urban contexts. Addressing this gap through increased leadership from and engagement with municipalities, as well as ground-level research and more localized approaches that directly engage with city-level actors and systems, is thus a critical piece of tackling internal displacement.

3. Key Findings

To better understand how different city leaders and managers experience urban internal displacement, the project team consulted six different municipalities, each with serious challenges due to forced displacement. The stories they told—combined with insights from the literature, feedback from the Global Roundtable, and ongoing experiences of the technical partners—have been synthesized into the key findings listed below.

Finding 1: Crisis responders need to better address urban internal displacement's unique features

As noted above, urban contexts demand particular types of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions, but many actors that traditionally respond to internal displacement are ill-equipped to address the peculiarities of cities and their complex urban systems. A growing body of policy-oriented and academic research has highlighted the negative unintended consequences this has on urban IDPs and host communities alike (see Archer and Dodman (2017) for a summary).

One issue that municipal leaders highlighted as particularly important for interventions in urban areas was the need to focus on systems, not individuals. Systems of service delivery, markets, transportation, etc. are inherently more complex in cities than in non-urban settings. Cities also have a level of political and governance complexity that outstrips rural areas, a fact that can be even more pronounced in fragile and crisis-affected settings.

Also highlighted was the fact that the line between IDP and urban poor is inherently blurred as they are often neighbours in the same underserviced and unplanned settlements, and this

distinction grows more difficult—and arguably less relevant—as displacement timeframes lengthen.

> *"[A key point about] Mogadishu is that it is the capital of Somalia. It has a lot of resources. It is probably one of the strongest institutions at [the] municipal level in Somalia…[but] when the city was first developed---and this was prior to the civil war---capacity [of the city] was ...maybe three to five hundred thousand people, in terms of the infrastructure that was developed. Now you're talking about a city of over three million people. So obviously [this implies] the need to make sure that [the city's] systems are responsive, to be able to get the resources needed for proper municipal [management] and to ensure that it's able to grow in accordance to the three million [people that use its] system[s], not the [population] it was designed for."*
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> *"You've got thousands of IDPs [who] have been there for 15, 20 years. Those people are Mogadishu citizens, literally residents. So, we need to figure out a way to make sure that their needs are addressed as residents, and not as a humanitarian case load. ... if you're in a displaced situation for the last 15, 20 years, you're no longer IDP. You are an urban poor. Full stop. ...there is no one going to IDPs and saying, 'we'll you're not from Mogadishu, so leave the city'. That [phenomenon] doesn't exist. By and large, people are here to stay. And [so the question is] how do we provide service[s] that attend to their needs."*
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> --Director of Durable Solutions Unit (DSU), Mogadishu, Somalia

Finding 2: The piece-meal and project-based assistance that is currently the norm in many crisis responses is often inappropriate for urban internal displacement contexts

Consultation participants expressed multiple concerns with project-based, short-term interventions that ignore the unique needs of urban settings mentioned in Finding 1. The short-time frames and tendency to bypass municipal authorities and local systems were seen at best as inefficient, and at worst as actively undermining longer-term, sustainable improvements to the well-being of IDPs and urban poor alike. Less visible, but no less damaging, are the well-documented instances in which such piece-meal programming erodes the population's faith in the capacities and relevance of their own local governments (Büscher and Vlassenroot, 2010, p. S269).

Development and peacebuilding actors were also viewed as frequently unwilling or unable to work within the local governance structures that exist in even the most fragile governance contexts. Making matters worse, as made clear in the Global Roundtable on 19 April 2021, roles and responsibilities between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors are not universally understood or respected. There are, however, promising approaches that can and should be scaled up. These include settlements-based[6] and cross-sectoral approaches, enhancing local capacity and fit-for-purpose planning, land administration, and municipal finance tools, and strengthening municipal service delivery systems.

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[6] See Recommendation 4 below for a more detailed explanation of the "Settlements Approach"

> *"There is a danger with [humanitarian] aid. They [the IDPs] benefit from cash, and the host community doesn't get anything. As mayor, I would be interested in innovation [in how to use the aid], to build infrastructure where everyone is going to work. Now, it is as if there is discrimination [between IDPs and host community members]. I would like there to be an innovation [in aid delivery] so that everyone could benefit and that it [the assistance] would be sustainable"*.
>
> --Mayor of Tougouri, Burkina Faso

> *"International cooperation must align and focus its efforts with and on the agendas of the municipalities. I believe that this should be the basic principle of cooperation… municipalities should not be treated or cities should not be treated with a single [cookie cutter] approach. The focus of cooperation should be to support and promote local efforts, not to impose their own agendas."*
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> -Vice Mayor of San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Finding 3: **Municipal actors are critical for ensuring successful responses to urban internal displacement**

Both local leaders and the experts consulted at the Global Roundtable stressed that municipal authorities are almost always the primary responders to internal displacement in their cities and will remain responsible for providing support to people in vulnerable situations long after all other external actors have left. As recent research has highlighted, municipal-level policies and actions help significantly shape the day-to-day reality of the displaced (Lintelo *et al.*, 2018) (Haysom and el Sarraj, 2013) (Keith, 2013).

Nevertheless, they are systematically overlooked by both international partners and national governments, and they thus struggle with lack of resources and lack of capacity. This includes not just mayors and their municipal staff, but also local service providers and local civil society actors. Many local governments, especially in the lower-income and fragile states where much of the displacement at issue occurs, are thus unprepared to respond to the influx of IDPs into urban settlements. address accelerated urbanization, or crisis-generated hyper-urbanization, is not realistic absent policy, institutional, and resource changes at both local and national government levels. Work to address these endemic weaknesses is the responsibility of both humanitarian and development actors.

> *"Today, no one can say if it [the situation] is going to get better or worse, but the municipalities need to put urban planning at the centre, where it [this competency] is more appropriate. We need support with tools like local communal development plans and urban plans to put the municipality back at the centre of local governance."*
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> -- Mayor of Dori, Burkina Faso

Finding 4: **Accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information on urban displacement's origins, trends and impacts is often lacking**

Despite increased attention to urban internal displacement, many contexts suffer from a dearth of data on the situation. For example, city officials have difficulty tracking population displacement within their jurisdictions. This is a matter of resources, but also of some of the inherent difficulties in identifying displaced populations in urban areas, including endemic insecurity in urban communities in which displaced populations tend to congregate and the desire of many of the displaced to remain anonymous in the face of persecution or discrimination by the state (Pantuliano *et al.*, 2012, p. S9; Horwood, Frouws and Forin, 2020).

There is also a need for improved data regarding impacts that displacement (and external actors' efforts to respond to the displacement) have on urban systems. This information can help identify and prioritize interventions and map local responsible institutions. Better data on risks of displacement related to natural hazards can also help to design solutions that will mitigate risks and limit future risk of displacement.

Finally, data on displacement need to include or be complemented by information on the circumstances that led to displacement to help identifying underlying socio-economic or political issues and dynamics and to ensure that the response is conflict-sensitive, adequate, fair and well accepted by beneficiaries and host populations. The joint submission by JIPS, IIED and UN-Habitat provides additional recommendations around data to better inform policy- and decision-making on urban displacement ((Nunez-Ferrera *et al.*, 2020).

> *"[There was] high level of interest of the Department of Social Protection in the results of the IDP needs' profiling[7]. The exercise is important to increase the efficiency of support to IDP integration and develop effective and long-term solutions (particularly in housing and employment) in the framework of all projects and programmes active in the region, including the state and international ones. [We should also emphasize] the importance of the information about the actual numbers and needs of IDPs, differentiated approach to the needs of IDPs living in the rural and urban communities".*
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> -- Luhansk, Ukraine Oblast Authorities

Finding 5: The local political context is a key determinant of the trajectory of an urban internal displacement crisis, and cannot be ignored

Failure to address the political dynamics of cities, and an over-emphasis on 'technical' solutions is likely to result in failed programs. Indeed, where cities have been successful in tackling urban internal displacement, technical solutions are generally less important than political ones, because the utility and sustainability of any technical or financial assistance can be easily undercut by lack of political will at multiple governance levels.

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[7] The profiling report is available at the report is accessible here: https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/profiling-idp-situation-luhansk-ukraine-dec2020/

Nurturing and harnessing the political support for durable solutions for internal urban displacement is something that national governments and external actors must pay attention to, but frequently fail to sufficiently take into account. It is also important to note that not all such actors will be positive or even benign forces for inclusion, protection and support of vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, whether allies or roadblocks, municipal authorities and local systems *are* present and will continue to be in the future, and so seeking to understand and work with the institutional and political structures that incentivize and constrain them is paramount for external actors seeking to make real, sustainable change. These issues take on particular salience in conflict-induced displacement situations, where socio-economic, political, religious or ethnic profiles of the displaced can strongly impact the level of political support for the (two-way) process of integration between IDPs and host communities and/or returns.

> *So, there was a very strong pressure for the issue to be recognized in the face of all this political will. Then the issue was already on the public agenda, the issue in academia, the Public Prosecutor's Office, pressuring the organizations and the Mayor's Office, and then the planning instrument of that time began to be formulated, which was the Single Comprehensive Plan. The Single Comprehensive Plan was the instrument that established the public policy to be able to say what the problem was and how it was going to be addressed. In that Single Comprehensive Plan, the issue of inter-urban displacement was documented and its dimensions, in which sectors it was occurring, what were the effects that were happening there, and on the other hand, the need to be able to budget for it.*"
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> -- Director of Ethnic Affairs at Colombia's Victims' Unit, and former Medellin Municipality Official

Finding 6: International humanitarian and development funding frequently fails to help municipalities respond to the urban internal displacement crises they face

Globally, there is a lack of funding and of associated financial mechanisms that can be used to channel badly needed resources to cities and relevant authorities. This gap is often based on a reluctance of donors to fund municipalities directly, as well as symptomatic of implementing agencies' lack of familiarity with local authorities' needs, systems and ways of working. The result is that resources fail to flow to some of the very actors whose roles are both most important and most under resourced.

> *"If we're talking about integrating IDPs or making sure IDPs have the same opportunities as everyone else, then therefore we need to focus on the systems and institutions that are supposed to be providing the basic service and protection. That is foundationally a government responsibility. We can't reduce evictions without having strong government institutions, we can't put in place policies and laws and procedures if the municipality and the local government and the federal partners are not working together. But that also requires resources, understanding and shifting from the idea of continuously funding external partners to deliver this work. We have seen it. It has failed…And we can show some examples of what we've been doing over the past couple of years to reduce the risk of human rights violations when it comes to…evictions. But compared to what it's been from the previous years and what we've been able to do in the*
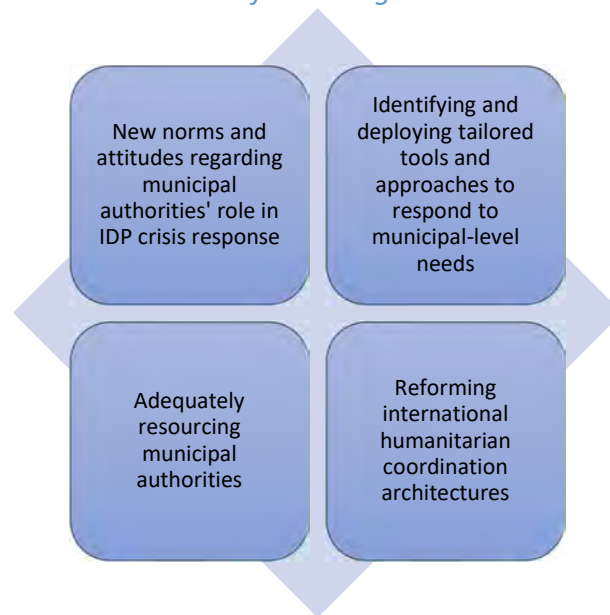
4. Recommendations for the UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

The findings above reaffirm that the unique features of urban internal displacement demand a *fundamental rethink*[8] of humanitarian and development assistance and programming in urban displacement contexts. This rethink is captured in the interrelated recommendations to the High-Level Panel presented below.

Four Interconnected Recommendations for the High-Level Panel's Consideration

New norms and attitudes regarding municipal authorities' role in IDP crisis response

Identifying and deploying tailored tools and approaches to respond to municipal-level needs

Adequately resourcing municipal authorities

Reforming international humanitarian coordination architectures

Recommendation 1: **International actors need new ways of thinking about municipal-level dynamics of urban internal displacement**

Changes to attitudes and perceptions rooted in outdated or misguided understandings of urban internal displacement are urgently needed to address the issue. The central assertion in the original research paper was that displacement to urban areas should be reconceptualized as an accelerated version of an inevitable and widespread trend towards urbanization currently occurring across the world. As noted in the aforementioned journal article preceding this report (Earle *et al.*, 2020), this rethink would place urban systems—including municipal authorities, networks of basic service provision, markets for goods and services, and social infrastructure—front and center in displacement responses, thereby treating them as active potential contributors to IDP protection, well-being, self-reliance, and integration. While not all urban IDPs will remain in cities—and full support should be provided to those wishing to return or relocate elsewhere—a significant portion

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[8] See (Earle *et al.*, 2020) and (Nunez-Ferrera *et al.*, 2020) for a more detailed discussion of this suggested rethink.

will, especially in protracted displacement contexts which are increasingly the norm. This trend merits additional attention by humanitarian actors.

The following are important additions to this overarching insight:

- Given that many urban displaced will remain in cities and towns, conceiving of them as urban citizens, with both rights and responsibilities, is needed, particularly in protracted displacement contexts. Doing so will ensure longer-term outlooks for interventions, and also ensure equity of assistance for IDPs and host communities.
- The standards of service delivery and support offered to IDPs cannot be solely based on universal conceptions of adequacy, in cases where the host communities themselves often struggle to achieve such standards. Flexible, context-specific benchmarks and socio-politically informed standards are thus needed.
- A greater focus on the political and economic incentives that shape each urban displacement context and its unique opportunities and constraints should be prioritized over purely technical solutions (Levine *et al.*, 2012). Politics is an uncomfortable aspect for most humanitarian organizations and even some development ones. It is, however, an unavoidable feature of working in urban forced displacement settings—particularly in post-conflict context where tensions between different groups, displaced, returnees and host population can be high. Ignoring this fact artificially masks implicit political decisions and mechanisms behind a veneer of technocratic operations but does not remove them. It may also create harm by supporting solutions that support the interest of one (political, religious, ethnic, economic) group over another.
- Urban *systems*, not sectoral focuses, should form the language and logic of interventions—regardless of whether they are humanitarian or development in nature. Services in cities are delivered through systems of infrastructure and a diversity of service providers (public, private and community-based). These tend to be interconnected, and pressures or dysfunctionality in one (e.g. water) can lead to challenges in another (e.g. health). Failing to account for these linkages (as can be the case with the emergency cluster system as discussed below) can result in sub-optimal outcomes or missed opportunities. Conversely, by leveraging the urban system towards solutions for IDPs, it is important to assess and project strains on urban infrastructure, housing and basic services, manage them through urban planning and land management interventions, and ensure responsible entities are empowered and have necessary resources to able to meet additional demands due to displacement (Nunez-Ferrera *et al.*, 2020)
- A clear distinction needs to be made between cities *located within a crisis* and cities *in crisis*. Cities in the former category tend to have functioning—albeit strained—urban systems and thus receive IDPs because of the relatively favourable conditions they offer to displaced households. In the latter case, cities are themselves directly affected, and humanitarian imperatives may warrant (temporary) establishment of parallel systems of aid and basic service delivery. Problematically, there is often a bias within humanitarian programming that incentivizes agencies to assume all cities fall into the second category, thus justifying short-cuts in engagement with city officials and the existing systems they manage.
- Urban IDPs have the potential to contribute positively to the social and economic development of the cities and towns in which they are settling. The resources, purchasing power, and skills they bring can result in net positives for their new communities—provided that appropriate and inclusive policies are put in place.

<u>Recommendation 2</u>: Tailored capacity building and technical assistance for municipal authorities should be mainstreamed into humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming

The shifts in thinking recommended above point towards the need for tailored approaches and tools for working on urban displacement. In developing this approach, international actors should draw on and consolidate experiences of rapid fit-for-purpose urban land administration at scale, integrated (rapid) urban and territorial planning, concessional financing and own-source revenue approaches. When devising these new urban-oriented displacement response tools, there should be a focus on working with and through local government and urban expertise.

Leadership and empowerment of municipalities depend on a combination of political, administrative and operational capabilities, and the absence of one or more of them can compromise political will, accountability and capacity to acknowledge and take responsibility for upholding IDPs' rights. Capacity building should be comprehensive in order to embrace each these aspects.

Donors, international actors and international and regional networks of local authorities must invest in making concepts, definitions and frameworks on internal displacement available to municipalities and support them in translating these into practice. This could include, for example, integrating the response to IDPs into inclusive local development plans, developing city level durable solutions strategies covering the full spectrum of possible solutions, or amending laws and policies that prevent IDPs from enjoying their rights in the city. At lower levels of local administration, understanding of and information on IDPs' rights and entitlements are critical to ensure access to services and tailored assistance. This may require dedicated funding and reporting requirements from donors. The inclusion of IDPs and local host communities should be a core feature of each step of these planning processes.

Collaborating with local governments on data collection and analysis can catalyse change in their attitudes, counter misconceptions on internal displacement and help align competing agendas. Engagement and leadership of local government in data gathering and analysis that informs short-term responses and long-term planning for urban displacement are critical ways to incentivize political will and accountability and promote alignment with local development agendas. This will avoid a situation where data and analysis of internal displacement in cities that is carried out by international partners to inform humanitarian decision-making and lacks the necessary buy-in from municipalities. It will also help local governments to assume their role as primary duty bearers in urban displacement contexts. Focused support on the creation of databases and mapping capacities to better understand settlements dynamics, conditions, challenges, trends, and patterns of IDP movements and the informal settlements in which they often congregate are important examples of specific tools that are sorely needed in urban displacement contexts.

<u>Recommendation 3</u>: International financing modalities need to adapt to the complicated and fluid contexts of urban displacement crises, not the other way around

Beyond changes in attitudes and perceptions, changes to how responses to urban displacement are financed will be needed to stimulate real change. These adaptations—some of which could be

achieved relatively easily and others which might require more fundamental changes to the international aid system—should include the following:

- Funding that is more flexible in terms of duration and its use will help programming be more responsive to rapidly changing political dynamics and promote a focus on systems-level improvements that will only be achieved over multi-year timelines. Where humanitarian funding is used in situations of protracted displacement but cannot be extended, explicit links to nexus programming (and concomitant funds) should be promoted.
- Greater flexibility in funding to allow for greater opportunities to working more closely with municipalities, either through direct grants or by rewarding applicants who offer close partnerships in funding calls. To facilitate this shift, innovations in funding mechanisms are needed to ensure an adequate and effective use of funds. Examples from pilot initiatives directly financing municipalities currently being conducted by UN-Habitat, the Mayors Migration Council and others may provide useful models for scale-up.
- Modalities are needed to channel earmarked funding to urban service providers to enable them to address strains.
- Since displacement in cities tends to be protracted, sequenced funding that not only provides for short- and medium-term needs, but also helps city officials strengthen revenue bases and attract external financing is needed.

Recommendation 4: The humanitarian aid architecture needs to be reformed to better address urban crisis settings

The coordination of humanitarian responses—currently based on the emergency cluster system—has inherent shortcomings that run counter to the new ways of engaging in urban displacement contexts advocated by this report (Sanderson, 2019, p. 2). These include the tendency to work in sectoral silos, to eschew collaborating with local authorities, and an inherent focus on individuals or households as the unit of intervention (Earle, 2016, p. 82) make it difficult to reconcile with the shifts in thinking advocated above.

Part of the solution involves better empowering local authorities to coordinate and negotiate with humanitarian and development actors, so that agendas are aligned from the outset and urban displacement is better managed. International actors and donor working on internal displacement should ensure that city authorities have a seat in multi-stakeholder discussions and a say on interventions related to internal displacement, which are often geared only towards national governments. International and regional networks of city officials can also play an important role in advocacy, peer-to-peer exchange and knowledge sharing, and in providing insights into the capacity building needs of local authorities dealing with internal displacement.

One alternative to the rigid sectoral groupings of the cluster system is the "Settlements Approach," which focuses on human settlements—as opposed to specific sectors—as the most appropriate unit to coordinate humanitarian programming to maximize collective solutions (*Settlements Approach Guidance Note: Where Boundaries and Action Merge*, 2020)

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