



# The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

Follow-Up to the Report of the UN  
Secretary-General's High-Level Panel  
on Internal Displacement

JUNE 2022



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Secretary-General's High-Level Panel  
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**United  
Nations**

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**Cover picture:** A young girl in the Warga Dala camp in Zakho,  
Northern Iraq, October 2014. OCHA/Iason Athanasiadis

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> . . . . .	4
<b>2. Goals of the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement</b> . .	7
<b>3. Finding solutions to internal displacement.</b> . . . . .	9
Leadership by national and local authorities . . . . .	10
UN engagement on solutions at global and country levels	10
Financing for solutions . . . . .	13
Engaging the private sector on solutions . . . . .	14
Data for solutions . . . . .	14
<b>4. Preventing future displacement crises</b> . . . . .	16
Reducing conflict and violence as drivers of displacement	17
Reducing the displacement risks posed by climate change and disasters . . . . .	18
Addressing intersecting threats that contribute to displacement . . . . .	20
<b>5. Ensuring better protection and assistance for IDPs and host communities</b> . . . . .	21
<b>6. Conclusion and follow-up.</b> . . . . .	24

# 1. Introduction

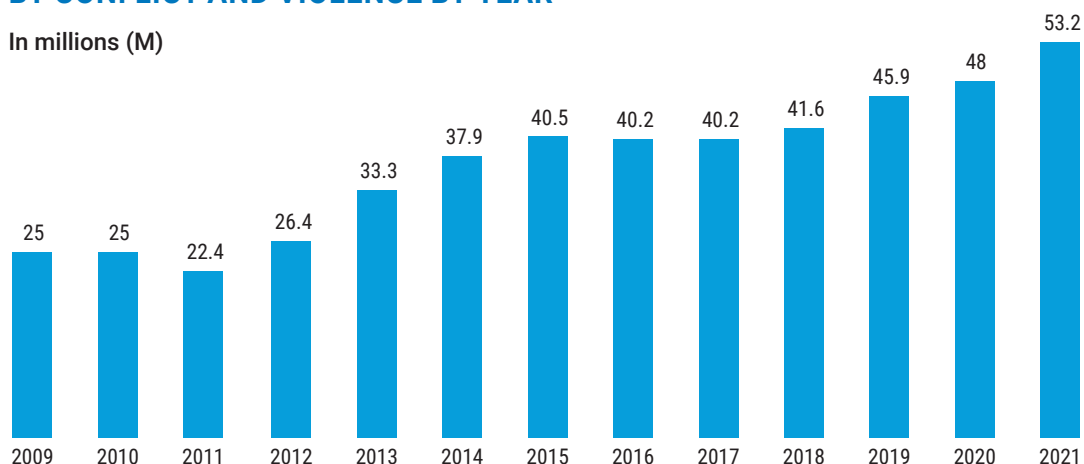
The world is at a breaking point. Conflicts are lasting ever longer and human rights are routinely and systematically violated. Climate-related disasters are growing in frequency and intensity. COVID-19 brought the world to its knees and has placed many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even further out of reach. Where these threats intersect—and they often do—the dangers multiply and become mutually reinforcing.

In all these crises, **record numbers of people have been forced from their homes and entire communities remain trapped in protracted displacement.** The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has doubled over the last 10 years, with women, children and marginalized groups often facing the greatest impacts.

The urgency to prevent internal displacement and find durable solutions is particularly acute in light of climate change, which is not only a driver of displacement but also a risk multiplier. The World Bank estimates that **216 million people could be forced to move internally by 2050 in just six regions due to climate change** if immediate action is not taken.

## PEOPLE INTERNALLY DISPLACED BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE BY YEAR

In millions (M)

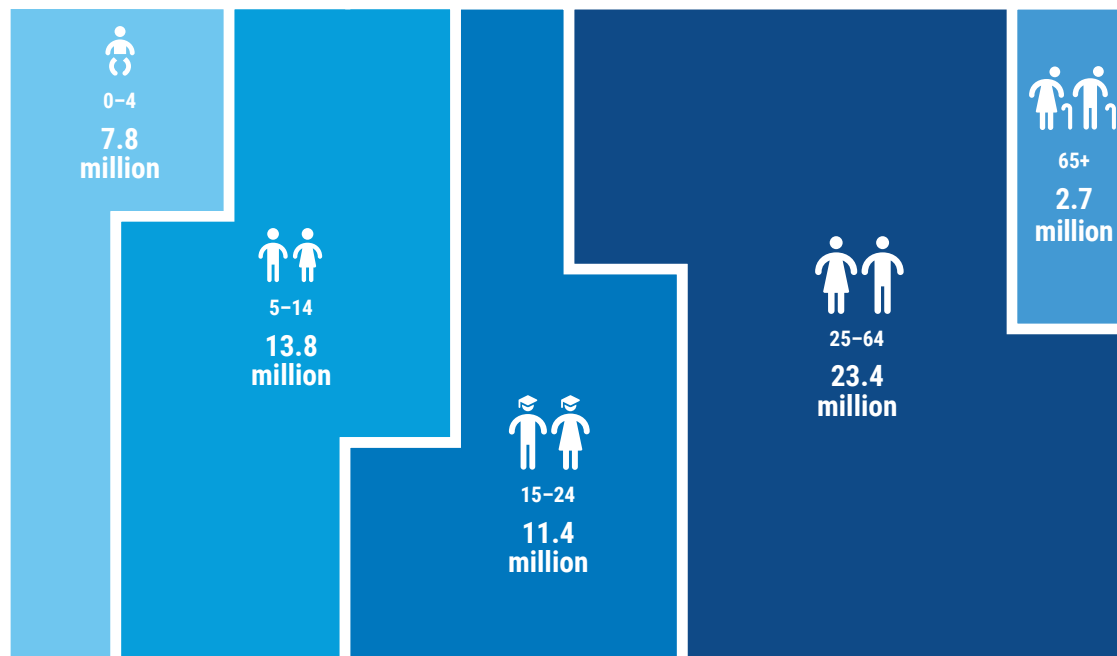


Source: IDMC, GRID 2022

**We face an untenable situation.** It is untenable for those who are internally displaced and long to re-establish a lasting home. It is untenable for host communities whose capacities to meet their own needs often become overstretched. And it is untenable for countries and cities for whom having large numbers of IDPs constitutes a major hurdle to meeting the SDGs.

## BREAKDOWN OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE BY AGE GROUP

59.1 million IDPs by end 2021

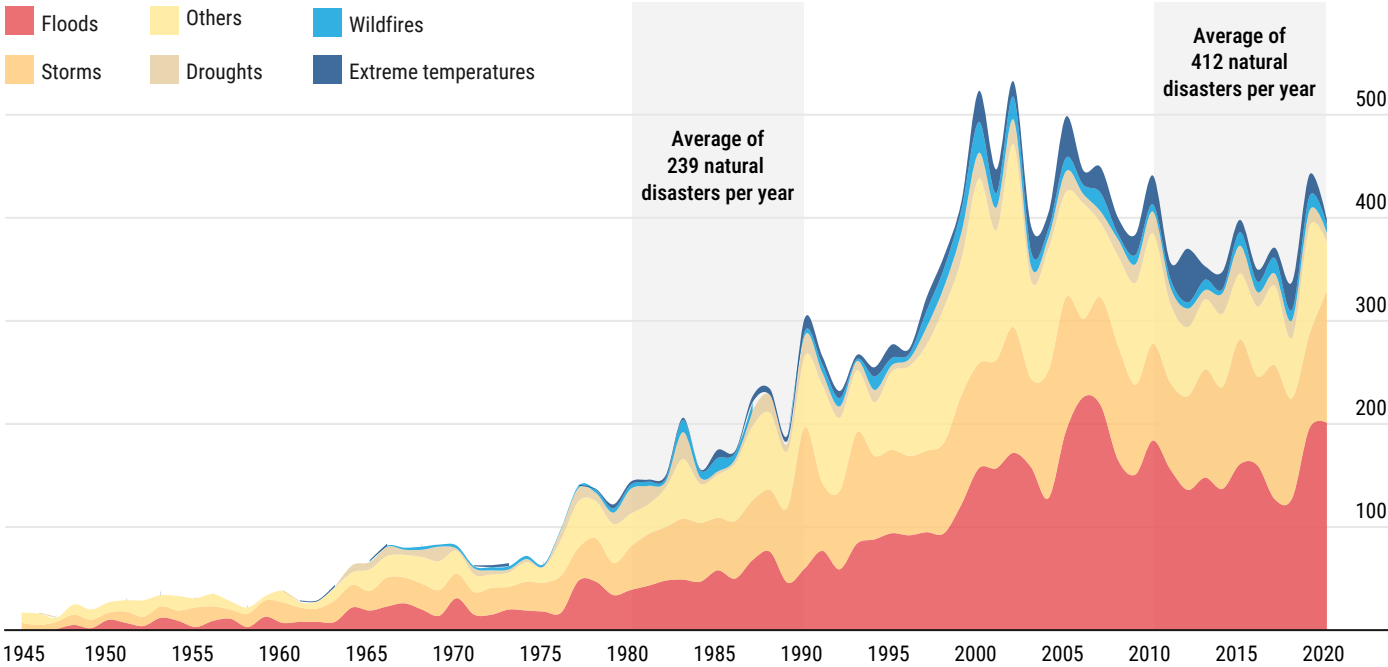


Estimated number of people of different age groups living in internal displacement as a result of conflict, violence and disasters globally at the end of 2021. Source: IDMC, GRID 2022

Recognizing this crisis, and building on an appeal from 57 States, I established a High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement at the end of 2019. Over the course of 19 months, the Panel consulted widely and sought out new ways to drive change. It presented its [final report](#) on 29 September 2021, with 10 overarching recommendations for improved action. **The task now falls to all of us to deliver on the changes that are so urgently needed.**

**CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS DOUBLED THIS DECADE COMPARED TO THE 1980S**

Man-made natural disasters such as floods and droughts have almost tripled during the same period



Others: Earthquakes, Epidemics, Infestations, Landslides, Mass movements and Volcanoes  
 Chart: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: WTO/CRED



## 2. Goals of the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

Building on the findings and recommendations of the High-Level Panel, my message is simple: **More of the same is not good enough.** As I set out in Our Common Agenda, there is an urgent need for a renewed social contract between Governments and their citizens and residents—including those who are displaced—to restore trust and ensure that rights and needs are met. I also called for stronger international solidarity to address global challenges, including internal displacement. The world committed to Leave No One Behind in achieving the SDGs, but we cannot deliver on this promise if millions of people remain uprooted from their homes with no end to their displacement in sight.

We have the tools and expertise at our disposal to support IDPs, host communities and people at risk of displacement to find a better future. Today I am setting out my plan for how we can work together to realize this ambition. Informed by Our Common Agenda and my Call to Action for Human Rights, and building on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the report of the High-Level Panel, my **Action Agenda on Internal Displacement** has three overarching goals that I believe the UN, States and other actors must work together to achieve:

- 1 Help IDPs find a durable **solution** to their displacement.
- 2 Better **prevent** new displacement crises from emerging.
- 3 Ensure those facing displacement receive effective **protection and assistance**.

These three goals are interlinked. No solution is sustainable if another crisis is looming. No assistance will be sufficient if underlying drivers remain unresolved. And prevention cannot succeed if past crises have not been addressed. We must thus go beyond thinking about phases

of action on displacement and instead recognize that **we must work towards prevention, response and solutions simultaneously** as part of a comprehensive approach. However, specific shifts are needed in how we deliver on each of these goals, with particularly significant adjustments needed in how we approach solutions.

### THREE INTERLINKED GOALS



**The Action Agenda sets out the UN's commitments to realizing these three goals.** If real progress is to be achieved, we will have to step up our efforts and, in some cases, fundamentally change our ways of working. Likewise, the goals can be met only if the UN works in close partnership with IDPs, local communities, national and local authorities, donors and development finance actors, civil society and the private sector. The Action Agenda thus also includes calls to many of these actors.

Given the importance of a common approach, the UN carried out extensive consultations on this Action Agenda with Member States and other stakeholders, including civil society, local authorities, regional organizations and IDPs, at the global, regional and country levels.<sup>1</sup> The consultations revealed strong support for the Action Agenda and its main focus on solutions. It is therefore **my sincere hope that we can all embrace it as a shared plan** for stepped-up efforts to drive real change.

## GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ACTION AGENDA



**IDPs are citizens and residents** of their country, and States have the primary responsibility to protect their rights and respond to their needs. **Sovereignty comes with responsibility**, and States should put in place and implement relevant laws and policy frameworks to address IDPs' rights and outline how displacement will be addressed as a whole-of-government priority.



Action to address internal displacement must recognize the **rights and agency of IDPs and host communities** and ensure their **active and informed participation** in decision-making. Approaches should be guided by the knowledge of local communities and address the specific needs of people of different ages, genders, abilities and diversities, including by promoting gender equality and the best interests of the child.



Addressing internal displacement is critical for delivering on the promise to **Leave No One Behind** in achieving the SDGs and for attaining lasting **peace and prosperity**. In view of this, action on internal displacement must be embraced as cross-cutting and part of humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, human rights, climate change action and disaster risk reduction efforts, ensuring a coherent and continuous response.



Action on internal displacement must be part of a **whole-of-displacement approach** that also considers the rights and needs of individuals who fled across international borders, individuals who returned after cross-border displacement and host communities.



**IDPs are increasingly settling in urban areas.** Response strategies must take into account the urban ecosystem and engage city Governments while also responding to the specific needs of individuals displaced from and to rural areas. Local authorities should be recognized as core partners in all settings.



A **whole-of-society approach**, including strong involvement of civil society, national human rights institutions and the private sector, is critical to ensuring action is locally owned and informed and that it draws on the full spectrum of available capacities.



Action should be based on high-quality and trusted **data and analysis**. Increased efforts are needed to ensure the right data is gathered, and that it is collected, managed and used responsibly and in an inclusive and collaborative manner.

<sup>1</sup> Consultations at regional level were spearheaded by the GP2.0 Global Platform on Internal Displacement


# 3. Finding solutions to internal displacement

When I formed the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement in 2019, I called on it to direct particular attention to how to better resolve situations of protracted internal displacement. Millions of IDPs are left languishing in camps and crowded urban settlements for years, often facing continued threats to their safety and well-being. We have a collective obligation to help them find a durable solution to their displacement by supporting them to sustainably reintegrate into their places of origin, local communities or other areas of the country. We must work creatively and collectively on this path from the outset of displacement, drawing on globally recognized standards such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.


There are real opportunities to facilitate solutions in many internal displacement contexts, opportunities that can and must be seized. This is achievable if we **go beyond treating internal displacement as just a humanitarian problem and recognize it as a priority for development, peace and climate action.** We must work towards nationally and locally owned solutions as part of a renewed social contract to ensure

that IDPs, along with other members of the local community, are protected and supported by the State and empowered as rights-holding citizens and residents of their country.


## A DURABLE SOLUTION CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH

-  Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (hereinafter referred to as "return")



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-  Sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge (local integration)



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-  Sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country)



## IASC FRAMEWORK FOR IDPS: 8 CRITERIA

-  Long-term **safety and security**
-  Adequate **standard of living**



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-  Access to **livelihoods and employment**
-  Access to **remedies and justice**

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-  **Family reunification**
-  Accessible mechanism for restoration of **housing, land and property**

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-  Personal and other **documentation**
-  Participation in **public affairs**

Source: IASC Framework

Delivering more sustainable solutions begins, crucially, with recognizing the rights and agency of IDPs of all ages, genders and diversities, including in respecting their right to choose the solution that is best for them and to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them. The engagement of host communities and communities in areas of return or future settlement is also vital. I commit that the UN will **redouble its efforts to ensure strong and inclusive participation of IDPs and local communities in all our solutions work**, including by promoting strengthened use of community-based planning and by facilitating the active involvement of people of all ages, genders and diversities in decision-making.

## Leadership by national and local authorities

**States bear the primary responsibility to facilitate sustainable solutions to internal displacement.** Sovereignty comes with responsibility, and displacement-affected States must recognize action on internal displacement as a national, whole-of-government priority with the rights of IDPs as citizens and residents at the centre. I urge States to work to create a safe and conducive environment for solutions and put in place measures to ensure IDPs can participate in voting and civic processes without discrimination. I further encourage States to proactively address displacement in national and local development action, urban and rural development planning, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change plans. States should invest in sustainable agriculture-based livelihoods to enable solutions and help prevent displacement driven by food crises. States should also ensure that IDPs benefit from a clear legal and policy framework in line with international human rights standards. I encourage regional organizations to play an active role in supporting States in these efforts.

Achieving solutions to displacement requires **high-level leadership and a whole-of-government approach**, bringing together all relevant line ministries, service providers, and rule of

law and judicial actors. Recognizing that the impacts of **climate change** both drive displacement and can hinder its resolution, effective solutions require engaging DRR and climate change adaptation actors. Given that an increasing number of IDPs are displaced to **urban areas** and prefer to remain there, it requires greater action from and support to local and city authorities. Local and national offices that support livelihoods, skills training, as well as secure tenure of housing, land and property will likewise be essential partners in the design and delivery of solutions.

I encourage displacement-affected States to put in place a **mechanism coordinated by a high-level focal point** that draws together all these actors to ensure collaboration at the national and local levels. Their work should be guided by a **whole-of-government solutions strategy** that is developed through a consultative and inclusive process, which, most crucially, draws on the views, capacities and preferences of IDPs and local communities. The strategy should set out how relevant ministries and different levels of Government will work together to facilitate solutions that are locally led and nationally supported, including in responding to the needs of other displacement-affected groups, such as host communities. I encourage Governments to work closely with the UN Resident Coordinators in developing this strategy and to establish a mechanism to **facilitate strong collaboration with international actors**.

## UN engagement on solutions at global and country levels

Many national and local Governments will need targeted assistance in scaling up their work on durable solutions. Along with the continued vital contribution of humanitarian organizations in laying the groundwork for solutions, there is an urgent need for **stepped-up, earlier and more predictable engagement of development actors**.

I express my full support for a shift towards a strengthened development approach to solutions and confirm the UN's commitment to deliver in this direction. Resolving displacement is critical for delivering on the promise to Leave No One Behind in achieving the SDGs and for attaining lasting peace and prosperity. In this context, the search for solutions must be embraced by development, peacebuilding, human rights, climate change action and DRR efforts. **Adopting this more integrated approach will require concerted efforts from across the UN system, including to make sure that protection and human rights remain at the heart of our solutions work, as outlined in my Call to Action for Human Rights.** We must also ensure that preparedness and prevention efforts—in relation to conflicts, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change—are approached hand in hand with solutions to ensure truly sustainable outcomes.

To help drive this shift in approach, and to provide a clear point of engagement for States and actors at the global level, I have appointed a time-bound **Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement** who will act with my authority to mobilize relevant expertise from across the UN system and lead collective efforts on solutions in follow-up to this Action Agenda. The Special Adviser will have no operational functions but will assume the role of the UN's prime advocate on solutions, working to mobilize Governments, international financial institutions (IFIs), the private sector, and other actors. The Special Adviser will work in concert with a **Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement**, which will engage at the global and country levels to drive stepped-up action and one-UN approaches to solutions.<sup>1</sup> At the global level, the group will be chaired by the Special Adviser. At the country level, its members will provide predictable support to UN Resident Coordinators and play an active role in solutions-coordination mechanisms. (For more details on the Special Adviser and the Steering Group, see the box on the right). The Special

Adviser and the Steering Group will work closely with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, who continues to mainstream human rights into UN responses to internal

## SPECIAL ADVISER AND STEERING GROUP ON SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The **Special Adviser** will help jump-start and drive implementation of this Action Agenda, with a focus on solutions. S/he will brief the Executive Committee on progress every six months and will provide regular updates to external stakeholders. The Special Adviser will have no operational functions but will assume the role of the UN's prime advocate on solutions, with three core responsibilities:

- 1 Galvanize political will through high-level advocacy at the global level and through field visits and advocacy support at the country level.
- 2 Strengthen linkages with development actors, including IFIs, around solutions at the global level.
- 3 Incentivize collaboration within the UN system to ensure that solutions are more effectively addressed within the UN's existing processes and mechanisms.

The **Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement** will work at the global and country levels to drive stepped-up action and one-UN approaches to solutions, and it will assume both operational and policy functions. At the global level, the group will be chaired by the Special Adviser. At the country level, its members should provide predictable support to UN Resident Coordinators and actively participate in relevant solutions-coordination mechanisms. At both the global and country level, the Steering Group will follow a hub-and-spoke model, including other stakeholders in its deliberations as necessary in an effort to link up to and mobilize other relevant actors from inside and outside the UN, including NGOs and multi-stakeholder forums. It will also draw upon the expertise and advice of other development actors as relevant, including the World Bank and other multilateral development banks.

<sup>1</sup> As at June 2022, the Steering Group was composed of DCO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, and UNHCR..

displacement, and they will draw on the support of the UN and civil society through relevant multistakeholder initiatives.

To embed a more joined-up and development-oriented approach on the ground, I am designating **UN Resident Coordinators (who in many places also act as Humanitarian Coordinators) as the UN's lead on solutions at the country level.** They are to proactively engage with national and local authorities on solutions, ensure solutions are reflected as a shared priority in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), and work with authorities to make sure a dedicated and costed solutions strategy is in place. In settings where a UN Peacekeeping Operation or Special Political Mission is deployed, the UN Resident Coordinator must also work closely with the head of the mission to ensure that solutions are reflected in each mission's political engagements and other mandated activities. These strengthened responsibilities build on the UN development system reform and efforts to improve harmonization across the humanitarian, development, peace and human rights pillars of the UN system.

Enabling UN Resident Coordinators to fulfil their solutions function requires providing them with enhanced access to support and capacity. This begins, first and foremost, with all **UN agencies and entities offering their full collaboration, expertise and assistance to UN Resident Coordinators** in carrying out their solutions-leadership role. UN Resident Coordinators will work closely with NGOs and civil society, who have a critical role to play in supporting and grounding solutions at the local level. The UN will also provide **targeted support to UN Resident Coordinators** through ensuring they can draw on advice and support from the global and regional levels, and—where relevant—receive dedicated capacity at the country level to support them on development-oriented approaches to solutions and working

across the humanitarian, development, peace and human rights areas.

To harness the full potential of different actors' contributions to solutions, UN Resident Coordinators will, with the support of the Steering Group members, be expected to **ensure effective coordination of internal displacement solutions efforts at the country level.** This needs to be done in partnership with the national and local Government wherever possible, and include IDPs and local community representatives, NGOs, donors and development finance actors, and civil society. Having a whole-of-society approach to solutions is essential. The coordination model should be tailored to the local context but should ensure that humanitarian, development, peace, human rights, and DRR and climate change adaptation actors are involved wherever possible.

To ensure this reoriented approach to solutions is embraced by the whole of the UN system, I am also asking the senior management of all relevant UN agencies and entities across the development, peace, humanitarian, human rights and disaster/climate branches to **develop a global, institutional plan by the end of 2022 for how they will reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement.** This aligns with broader efforts to place protection considerations at the centre of our collective engagement. The plan should provide an overview of how their operations will support UN Resident Coordinators' leadership on solutions, and it should include details of how they will build the necessary expertise in their organization to address displacement realities—including, for example, urbanization and climate change trends and projections, and continued needs for strengthening age-, gender- and diversity-sensitive approaches. The Special Adviser will assist in bringing together different actors on these plans to ensure they are complementary, mutually reinforcing and work in strategic partnership wherever possible.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 1 Redouble efforts to ensure **meaningful participation and systematic inclusion of IDPs and local community members** of all ages, genders and diversities in decision-making on solutions, including by scaling up community-based planning, and advocate with States to put in place measures to ensure IDPs are heard and included in solutions planning.
- 2 Support States to develop and implement **whole-of-government solutions strategies** with measurable progress indicators that are guided by the views and capacities of IDPs and local communities, and to embed solutions within national and local development plans.
- 3 Advocate with States and international actors for **stepped-up attention to urban displacement** and for support to local and city authorities in responding to the needs of urban IDPs and host communities.
- 4 Strengthen UN leadership and accountability on internal displacement by appointing a time-bound **Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement** to work in concert with an inter-agency **Steering Group**.
- 5 Designate **UN Resident Coordinators to serve as the UN's lead on solutions at the country level**, including to: proactively engage Governments on this issue; ensure solutions are reflected in UNSDCFs and HRPs; ensure a dedicated and costed solutions strategy is developed as needed; and ensure relevant and inclusive coordination mechanisms are in place.
- 6 Provide **additional support to UN Resident Coordinators** through ensuring they can draw on advice and support from the global and regional levels and—where relevant—dedicated capacity at the country level.
- 7 Task UN development, peacebuilding, humanitarian, human rights, and DRR and climate change actors to develop **global institutional plans**, by the end of 2022, for how they will reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement.

## Financing for solutions

I echo the High-Level Panel's strong call for bilateral donors and IFIs, including regional multilateral development banks, to put in place measures to **address internal displacement proactively and systematically as part of development financing**. Financing partnerships with national and local authorities are invaluable, and I believe that embedding greater attention to displacement within these efforts could drive real change, including in achieving the SDGs. There is an urgent need to scale up flexible and long-term financing for IDP-inclusive services, including by facilitating access to finance for local governments and service providers. I also encourage displacement solutions to be proactively incorporated into the implementation of the OECD Development

Assistance Committee Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

In addition, there is a need for predictable, **catalytic financing to help jump-start the solutions process** in relevant country contexts. To address this, the UN will convene an ad hoc forum of relevant development finance actors and affected States to explore how catalytic financing could be made more readily available. I am requesting this forum to agree on the most appropriate model by the end of September 2022 and to work to expedite its establishment.

In addition, recognizing that advancing on solutions is critical for realizing the promise to Leave No One Behind in delivering on the SDGs, I recommend that the **UN Joint SDG Fund hosts a dedicated thematic window on solutions to internal displacement**, which will receive

contributions that will be committed to joint solutions-focused programmes identified by United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 8 Work with development financing partners to **ensure solutions are pursued proactively and systematically as part of development financing**, based on analytics including socioeconomic data, and incentivize the inclusion of action on internal displacement within national and local development plans and associated budgeting.
- 9 Convene an ad hoc forum of relevant development finance actors and affected States to explore **how catalytic financing could be made more readily available for solutions** and, by the end of September 2022, agree on the most appropriate model and expedite its establishment.
- 10 Host a **dedicated thematic window for solutions to internal displacement within the UN Joint SDG Fund** that supports joint, solutions-focused programmes identified by UNCTs.

## Engaging the private sector on solutions

Resolving displacement will also benefit from strengthened engagement by local, national and international private sector actors, which often have untapped capacities to resolve impediments to solutions—particularly in supporting the recovery of livelihoods and contributing to resilience. When done responsibly, engaging the private sector can be beneficial for IDPs and businesses alike, and there is a need to better explore the potential for mutually beneficial engagement that supports IDPs while also serving core business objectives. To this end, the UN will work with relevant partners to **identify three to four contexts where there are opportunities to pilot means of strengthening**

**engagement with the private sector**, working with UN Resident Coordinators and ideally also drawing on a Global Compact Local Network or other business association. Building on these initial test cases, the UN will seek to scale up opportunities for strengthened private sector engagement across relevant internal displacement contexts. These efforts will also build on the work of the UN Global Compact and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which remain core frameworks for ethical private sector action, including to ensure that the private sector does not contribute to further displacement or associated risks.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 11 The UN will work with relevant partners to **identify three to four contexts where there are opportunities to pilot means of strengthening engagement with the private sector**, working with UN Resident Coordinators.

## Data for solutions

To strengthen collective action on solutions to internal displacement, there is a need for an improved understanding of IDP numbers, demographics, socioeconomic dynamics and associated trends. The High-Level Panel report noted that **attention is needed both to the type of data gathered and to how it is collected, managed, used and protected**, and it called on States to put in place internal displacement data systems. The Panel also called on international actors to better coordinate their data efforts and to support the strengthening of States' data capacities, where possible.

I agree with each of these points, and I emphasize the importance of harnessing data to better anticipate future displacement risks and to ensure data-informed responses to current displacement needs. The endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission of the International Recommendation on IDP Statistics represented



a major step forward in offering common standards and definitions. We must continue to build on this. We also need to understand the opportunities and barriers to more effective use of data to inform internal displacement responses and solutions efforts, and to find ways to overcome data coordination challenges. To this end, I have asked that a time-bound task force of relevant data actors from the UN, NGOs, IFIs and other relevant actors be convened to further clarify the obstacles to improved data collaboration and to examine the Panel's recommendation to establish IDP data working groups. **By the end of September 2022, the task force will generate a proposal for a fit-for-purpose process or coordination model** that can address data-specific issues and gaps, including how international actors can better support national statistical offices and

other national and local data efforts in line with relevant international standards.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 12** Support States to **put in place relevant mechanisms to collect, manage and use internal displacement** data in line with the International Recommendation on IDP Statistics and other relevant international standards.
- 13** Convene a **time-bound task force of relevant data actors** that will examine opportunities and barriers to more effective use of data for solutions and, by the end of September 2022, put forward a proposal for a fit-for-purpose process or coordination model to address data-specific issues and gaps.

## 4. Preventing future displacement crises

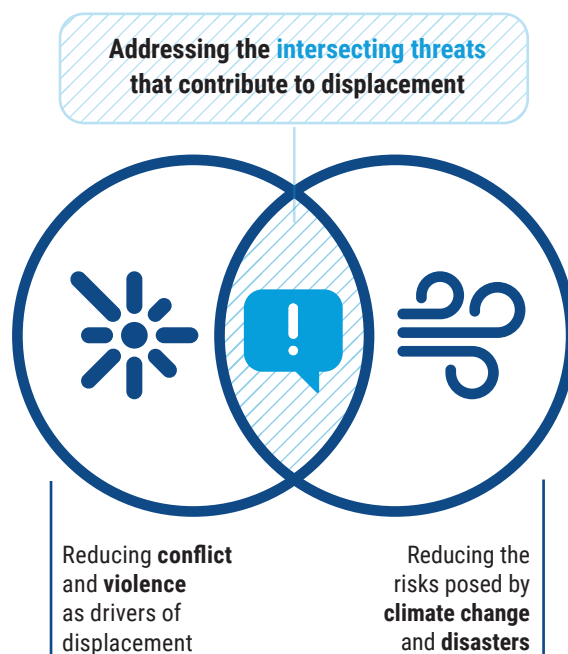
When I took office, I pledged that the UN would do more to prevent future crises. With ever more people fleeing wars, climate-related disasters, violence and human rights violations, prevention remains an urgent priority and is a key part of Our Common Agenda. We must do far more to prevent the drivers of displacement from occurring in the first place, both by addressing root causes and by mitigating immediate risks and their impacts. Taking action now to address these drivers constitutes the best form of protection and contributes to ensuring that solutions are sustainable.

**We look first and foremost to States for leadership on these issues:** for demonstrating long-term vision in taking steps to meet climate change mitigation targets, and for having the courage to prevent and de-escalate conflict and put human rights first. With almost 90 per cent of IDPs residing in countries or regions that host a UN Peacekeeping Operation or Special Political Mission, the UN has an important role to play at both the political and operational level, in close partnership with local communities, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and donors and development finance actors.

Across all actors, we need perseverance in prevention, knowing that its results are often less visible and tangible but no less important. We must, in particular, **prioritize prevention and preparedness earlier and more predictably**, including by using data and information to take anticipatory action and by making prevention a priority even as a crisis is unfolding. We must also recognize that internal displacement is often the result of threats and vulnerabilities that intersect

and overlap, which exacerbates displacement risks and requires careful attention from prevention through to solutions.

### PREVENTING FUTURE DISPLACEMENT CRISES



# Reducing conflict and violence as drivers of displacement

## **Civilians continue to bear an unacceptable toll in situations of conflict and violence.**

Every day, people are forced from their homes, lose loved ones, endure severe physical and psychological harm, and are torn from their livelihoods and support networks. Children face forced recruitment into armed groups, child trafficking and child marriage, among other threats, while women and girls, as well as men and boys, are exposed to alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence, further driving displacement as people move to escape these risks. International human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL) are violated repeatedly and flagrantly, with limited justice for the victims and survivors. While it is essential that people can leave safely if they choose to do so, we must all work to tackle the root causes that force people to flee.

**To Governments, I appeal in the strongest of terms: Respect people's fundamental rights and choose the path of peace.** The most effective way to protect communities from displacement is to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place and resolve those that are currently unfolding. Five years ago, States came together under the General Assembly and the Security Council to express their commitments to building and sustaining peace, and I urge all States to take credible steps to live up to this pledge. This includes taking action to renew the social contract through upholding human rights and addressing root causes of conflict, including those related to land, access to resources, and governance. States must listen to and engage with local communities, including women,

young people, community leaders and faith leaders, and put in place measures to resolve grievances. The UN is ready to support States in their efforts, including through developing and implementing early warning mechanisms, promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding, assisting in recovery and ensuring that development programming is conflict sensitive.

When armed conflicts do emerge, armed forces and other parties to conflict must abide by IHL and take all possible steps to avoid, minimize and respond to harm and the reverberating effects of conflict. In 2018, I appealed to States to put in place national policies for the protection of civilians in conflict. Too few States have heeded this call. Today I renew my appeal: **Governments should urgently put in place policies, trainings, guidance and other measures to protect civilians during conflict and reduce displacement risks.** Where violations of IHL occur, national and international efforts to pursue accountability and provide essential support services for victims and survivors must be a priority.

Within the UN, we will be a steadfast protector of humanity's most vulnerable. I commit that **we will leverage the UN's full power to defend human rights and confront threats to civilians**, including by engaging proactively with the Security Council, delivering on my Call to Action for Human Rights, and establishing a framework to ensure continued and proactive approaches in my forthcoming Agenda for Protection. I also call on other actors, notably regional organizations and States, to engage diplomatically and use their influence to promote human rights, address the drivers of forced displacement and reduce threats to civilians. It is only by working together that we can achieve real change and improvements to the safety of communities living in areas affected by conflict.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 14 Work with Governments, regional organizations, local communities and civil society to **address the root causes of displacement** and to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and mediation that considers displacement risks (and, where present, includes IDPs).
- 15 To reduce risks of displacement associated with human rights violations and conflict, **drive forward implementation of the Call to Action for Human Rights** and address displacement specifically in my forthcoming **Agenda for Protection**.
- 16 When there are early signs of conflict, renewed violence or threats to civilians, **mobilize rapid action to support de-escalation, political negotiation and conflict resolution**, and systematically address internal displacement as part of these efforts.
- 17 Advocate with Governments to put in place policies and measures to **promote the protection of civilians in situations of conflict and violence and reduce displacement risks** in line with IHL.

## Reducing the displacement risks posed by climate change and disasters

Each year, even greater numbers of people are displaced by disasters and the adverse effects of climate change than by conflicts. Extreme weather events are forcing more and more people from their homes, even in places previously considered safe. Climate change is also leading to more severe and frequent droughts, sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion and desertification, which fuel food insecurity and set in motion slow-onset crises that undermine resilience and devastate communities, driving further displacement. For low-lying island countries in particular, these risks

are truly existential and threaten to displace entire nations. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at COP21 in Paris, established a Task Force on Displacement to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change—work that today remains as urgent as ever.

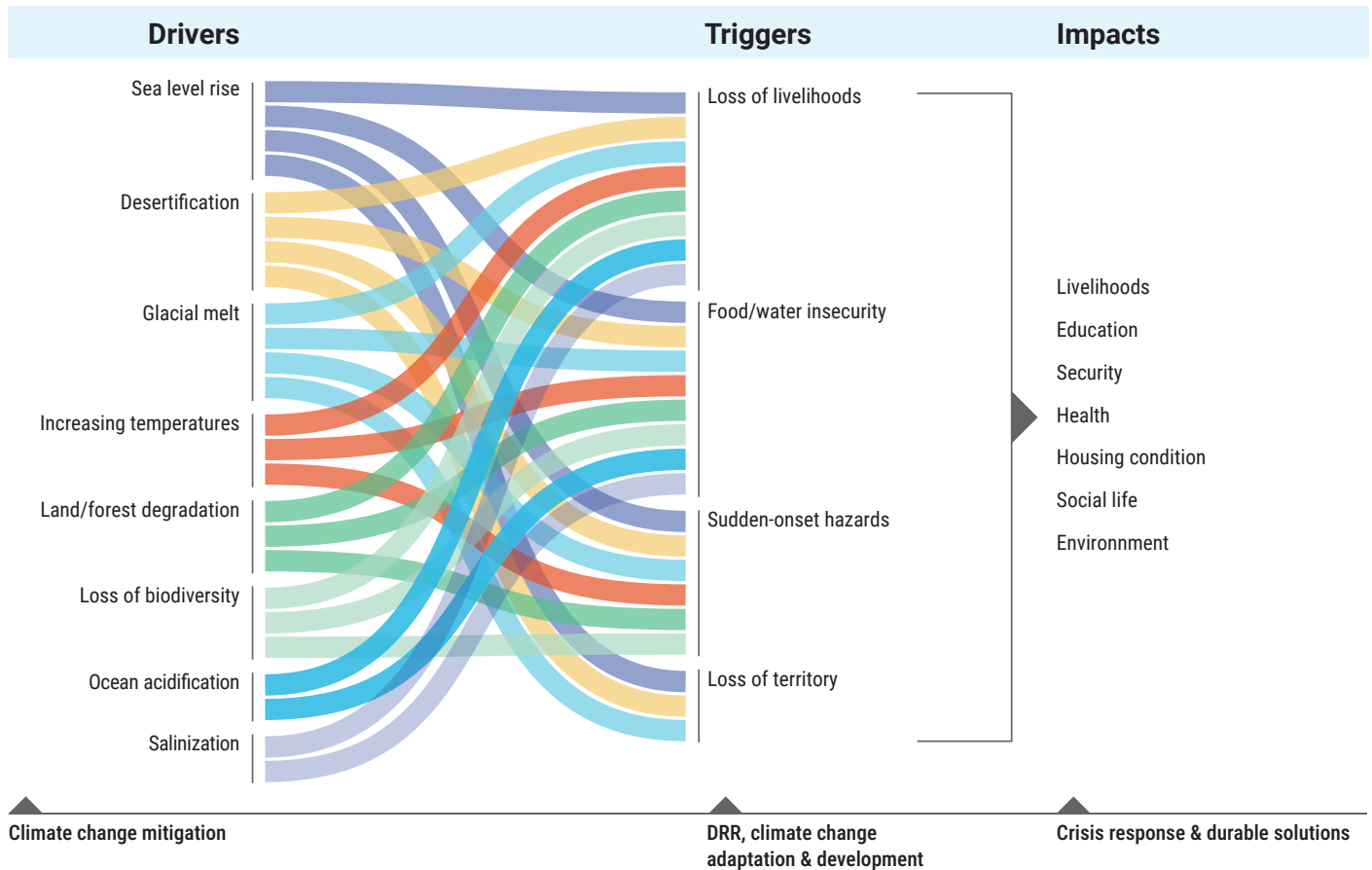
Our current fossil fuel consumption habits and environmental practices are pushing humanity to the brink. **We face a stark choice: either we stop it, or it stops us.** Governments must set bold, ambitious and verifiable climate change targets and put in place new, concrete measures to reverse and adapt to the climate emergency already under way. If Governments—especially G20 Governments—do not stand up and lead this effort, we are headed for catastrophe.

In addition, **we must dramatically scale up our work on climate change adaptation**, with particular consideration for those countries that are highly vulnerable, whose capacities are overstretched, or that are already grappling with disaster displacement or other forms of loss and damage linked to the adverse effects of climate change.

In 2009, wealthy nations pledged to contribute US\$100 billion per year by 2020 in climate finance to support developing countries—a pledge that still has not been realized. As high-emitting countries, these **Governments have an obligation to live up to this pledge** and I call on them to urgently do so. I further urge at least half of the funds to be dedicated to adaptation and resilience.

As part of the substantial expansion of adaptation and resilience, **we must collectively work to improve preparedness and early action for disasters and climate-related crises** to reduce displacement risks and their impacts, including by building on existing partnerships. We must greatly increase our use of forecast-based financing and anticipatory action, leveraging advances in data and analysis that make it possible to predict potential crises

## LINKAGES BETWEEN DRIVERS, TRIGGERS AND IMPACTS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND POLICY ACTION POINTS



Source: IDMC, No matter of choice: Displacement in a changing climate, 2021, p.7

earlier and more reliably. It is also essential to expand the reach of early warning systems, as one third of the world's population currently does not benefit from such mechanisms. I urge IFIs and State donors to ensure that vulnerable countries get timely access to these resources. These types of forward-looking approaches can be highly effective in mitigating the impacts of disasters and climate change.

Across DRR, adaptation and preparedness, **I urge national and local authorities to work closely with communities in developing their strategies and action plans.** Communities, including indigenous populations, often have a deeply attuned understanding of localized risks and threats, and invaluable knowledge of traditional prevention and preparedness

measures. We must also listen to the young people, including those who are already on the move and adapting to the impacts of climate change, who will inherit this planet and bear the future impacts of today's decisions.

The UN is ready to do its part. We will **address displacement more systematically as part of our work on climate change**, and we will work with national and local **Governments to ensure displacement is addressed within DRR policies and plans** in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We will also call on the considerable expertise offered by NGOs, civil society and the private sector in these efforts, as well as on donors and development finance actors, whom I urge to provide robust funding.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 18 Advocate strongly for States to deliver on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment** to support developing countries and to dedicate at least half of these funds to climate change adaptation and resilience.
- 19 Address displacement proactively and systematically** as part of the UN's work on climate change, including by supporting the work on the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.
- 20 Support Governments to ensure climate risks are integrated into policies and investment decision-making**, and to ensure that **displacement risks and associated protection needs are systematically considered within policies, strategies and plans** relevant to DRR, climate change action, urban planning and development, including by assisting in drafting or revising the policies in line with the State's commitments under the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- 21 Advocate for donors and development finance actors to utilize data and analysis to dramatically scale up investments in forecast-based financing and anticipatory action** while continuing to support broader early warning, DRR, humanitarian assistance and community resilience programmes, and to ensure countries are able to access this finance.

## Addressing intersecting threats that contribute to displacement

The tragic reality is that many countries are affected by both conflict and the impacts of climate change and disasters. In 2020, **37**

**countries and territories with new internal displacement associated with conflict or violence also experienced new internal displacement due to disasters.**

Risks from conflict, disasters and climate change are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing: Natural resource constraints caused by climate change may create tensions and lead to violence within communities, or communities displaced by conflict might not be able to return because of the impact of climate change in their areas of origin. Individuals and communities with pre-existing vulnerabilities are often most at risk of repeated harm.

As we move forward, we must do more to develop a nuanced understanding of the root causes of displacement crises, intersectional risks and vulnerabilities, and reflect this in laws, policies and plans to reduce displacement risks and build the resilience of the most vulnerable people. The UN will support national and local authorities in these efforts. Further, I commit that within the UN, agencies and entities that specialize in DRR, climate change and peacebuilding will work together closely, including to support UNCTs and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) **to undertake holistic analysis of how risks intersect and ensure that this analysis informs their strategies and interventions.** I call on States, donors and other actors to also take steps to ensure a fulsome understanding of risk interactions and to reflect this in their approaches.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 22 UN agencies and entities with expertise on DRR, climate change, human rights, humanitarian affairs, development and peacebuilding will work within their organizations and together to promote holistic understanding of displacement and risk intersections**, including on the intersection of conflict and the impacts of climate change, and they will support UNCTs and HCTs to reflect this in their work.

# 5. Ensuring better protection and assistance for IDPs and host communities

Every year, millions of IDPs and host communities do not receive the protection and assistance to which they are entitled. While many Governments make commendable efforts to respond to their populations' rights and needs, capacities are often overwhelmed, competing priorities are given precedence, and some Governments neglect their duties to their displaced citizens and residents altogether, including by failing to adequately prepare for displacement crises. In some cases, Governments themselves drive displacement and create assistance and protection needs.

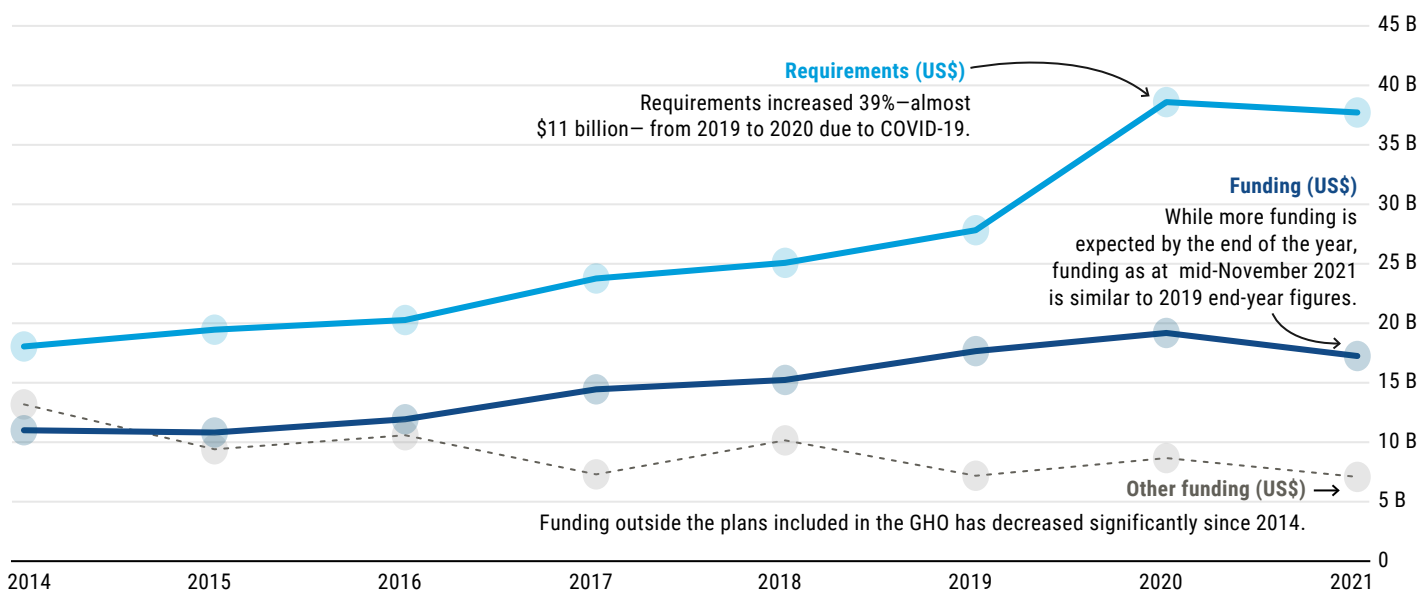
**The world must do more to close the gap between humanitarian needs and the protection and assistance provided.** After having already been torn from their homes, livelihoods and support networks, IDPs should not have to endure further fear for their safety and well-being. We must strengthen the quality of assistance and protection, an effort that should be shaped and guided by a central focus on human rights. This is in line with my Call to Action for Human Rights, which urged renewed efforts to protect the human rights of all displaced populations, including in times of crisis.

**States have a fundamental obligation to keep their populations safe, including when they are displaced.** States must transcend grievances and make listening and responding to the needs of their citizens and residents—all citizens and residents—a priority, and ensure that people in need have a voice in shaping the assistance they receive. This must cross ethnic, political and religious lines and include people of all ages and genders, as well as those of other diversities who

face marginalization or exclusion. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should continue to serve as a guide for all States in these efforts, and relevant laws and policy frameworks, such as the Kampala Convention, should be proactively implemented.

Where Government capacities are overwhelmed or authorities are unable or unwilling to reach certain segments of the population, they should seek and welcome support. Impediments to humanitarian operations and attacks on civilians and humanitarian staff are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. All of us have a responsibility—whether as the UN, as regional organizations, as States or as civil society—to engage strongly and proactively when principled humanitarian action and access to assistance and protection are under threat. I call on all actors to use their voice to protect humanitarian space and, within the humanitarian system, I reaffirm that **Humanitarian Coordinators are expected to coordinate and lead on these collective efforts, including as they relate to IDPs.** The

## INTER-AGENCY COORDINATED APPEALS: FUNDING GAP (2014-2021)



All requirements and funding between 2014 and 2020 are as of end-year. Requirements and funding for 2021 as of 19 November.  
 Chart: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: WTO/CRED

IASC’s Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action makes clear that the rights of crisis-affected populations are at the heart of what we do and we must all work towards ensuring they are respected. UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions will also continue to have a vital role to play in protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian access.

It is important to recognize the generosity of humanitarian donors, whose contributions have steadily grown over the past 10 years. This increase has not succeeded in keeping pace with rising needs, but the contributions are nevertheless a manifestation of the type of solidarity and commitment to multilateralism that we need today more than ever. I hope that we can continue to count on this vital support. **I appeal to donors to continue innovating and striving for greater effectiveness in how financing is delivered**, including by strengthening efforts to implement Grand Bargain commitments, such as increasing the use of flexible, multi-year financing and further scaling up the use of cash. Funding investments must also go hand in hand with political commitments and engagement to sustainably resolve crises and prevent their recurrence.

Within the UN, we must continually reflect on our own ways of working to ensure we deliver the most effective response possible. In 2005, the Cluster Approach was established as part of a broader humanitarian reform process to strengthen the coordination and leadership of humanitarian responses to internal displacement crises. While the IASC system has offered considerable improvements to international responses, the report of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement identified a number of challenges that merit further examination. To this end, I welcome **the decision of the IASC to commission and complete in early 2023 an independent review of humanitarian response to internal displacement**, and I urge it to act on its findings and recommendations, which should pay particular attention to how the humanitarian system can improve the assistance to and protection of IDPs and lay a better groundwork for solutions.

Even while the review is under way, responders can and should start to make some adjustments. Within the UN, we will **promote understanding of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** to ensure they inform all of our protection and assistance responses to internal



displacement. We will strengthen accountability to IDPs and host communities and **deliver on the Participation Revolution promised in the Grand Bargain**. Another essential element is to **work with and through local systems and local partners** as much as possible as part of a whole-of-society approach. Development actors should work closely with humanitarian actors in this process, particularly in exploring possibilities for strengthening local public systems to include IDPs. In urban areas, **urban profiling should be used more strategically** to understand the capacities and vulnerabilities of displacement-affected communities and the urban ecosystem to better inform the response.

Investing in programmes and services that provide a foundation for solutions is also crucial

and should be recognized as a priority from the earliest days of a response. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should provide leadership on this, including by ensuring that HRPs promote a pathway to solutions and by strengthening coherence between the work of HCTs and UNCTs. Operationally, **programmes that can support eventual solutions should be recognized as a priority**, such as supporting IDPs to recover civil documentation, promoting access to education and livelihoods, ensuring access to health care, and working towards access to adequate housing and land. Development and humanitarian actors should work together to lay the foundation for solutions, and peacebuilding and DRR actors should likewise be engaged to assist in mitigating the risks of future crises or deteriorations.

## UN COMMITMENTS

- 23** Call on **States to protect the rights and respond to the needs of their displaced citizens and residents** in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and relevant laws and policy frameworks, such as the Kampala Convention.
- 24** Advocate for States to work proactively to ensure **IDPs of all ages, genders and diversities have access to public systems and services**.
- 25** Strongly **advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access, and continue to provide neutral, impartial and independent protection and assistance** to crisis-affected populations when Governments are unable or unwilling to respond.
- 26** Work with donors and UN agencies on **strengthening the effectiveness of financing modalities, including in implementing Grand Bargain commitments**.
- 27** Complete in early 2023 the **independent review of humanitarian response to internal displacement** currently being commissioned by the IASC, and act on its findings and recommendations.
- 28** **Promote understanding of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement within the UN and among its partners**, and ensure that the Guiding Principles are the foundation upon which our protection and assistance activities are carried out.
- 29** **Continue strengthening accountability to IDPs and host communities**, including by redoubling efforts to deliver on the Participation Revolution promised in the Grand Bargain.
- 30** **Work with and through local systems, local authorities and local civil-society actors** as much as possible, supporting locally led responses and avoiding the creation of parallel structures.
- 31** Take steps to **lay the foundation for solutions earlier in responses** by incorporating pathways to solutions into HRPs and recognizing solutions-enabling programming as a priority, while simultaneously working to understand and mitigate future displacement risks.

# 6. Conclusion and follow-up

There is a long road ahead, but together it is possible to achieve real change.

**It is important that all actors make commitments for how they will implement the elements of this Action Agenda that relate to them.** I further encourage Member States and other stakeholders to reflect on and take forward the broader recommendations included in the High-Level Panel report, beyond those addressed in this Action Agenda. To this end, I call on **Governments to organize national dialogues** that draw together affected communities and relevant experts to assess the potential domestic application of this Action Agenda and the recommendations of the High-Level Panel report.

In addition to these national dialogues, throughout the consultations that informed this Action Agenda, States and civil society have signaled their strong interest in having a **platform for ongoing dialogue on internal displacement at the regional and global levels.** I welcome this interest and encourage Member States and other stakeholders to work collaboratively to establish such a platform. It would provide a critical forum to share lessons and experiences, maintain the momentum created by the High-Level Panel, and work

towards concrete commitments by States and other actors in follow-up to the High-Level Panel report and this Action Agenda. Such a platform would be best led by Member States themselves and might, as a first milestone, build towards a **high-level event on internal displacement, to take place in 2024.** This event would be an opportunity for States and other key stakeholders to make new, concrete pledges to action on internal displacement, reaffirm their support for existing normative frameworks, such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and, if agreed, articulate a new declaration or common statement of commitments on preventing, addressing and resolving internal displacement crises. The Special Adviser and the Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement stand ready to work closely with Member States and other key stakeholders in pursuing the establishment of such a platform, which might build on and adapt existing mechanisms.

There is no time to waste in addressing internal displacement. Millions of IDPs are counting on us. **It is my true hope that we can embrace this as a shared Action Agenda** and that we will all work with determination and courage to deliver a better future for IDPs.