



## Submission to the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

### 1. Introduction

In response to the 12 March 2020 call for written submissions of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (UNDRR) herewith offers its views for consideration in the Panel's analysis of the internal displacement crisis.

UNDRR is the custodian agency for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework), which was adopted by all UN Member States in March 2015 as the global plan to reduce disaster risk and build resilience across all sectors and societies. The Sendai Framework with its seven targets for the prevention of disasters and the reduction of disaster losses is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDRR proposes that **the Panel prioritize disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures to prevent displacement caused by disasters in its analysis**, and herewith submits the UNDRR Words into Action guidelines [“Disaster Displacement: How to Reduce Risk, Address Impacts and Strengthen Resilience”](#) (WiA on Disaster Displacement) as an input to the Panel's review.

We also refer to the submissions to the High-level Panel from the [Platform on Disaster Displacement](#) and the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#), who co-developed the WiA on Disaster Displacement with UNDRR and implementing partners of the project, “Reducing Disaster Risk, Supporting Resilience and Protecting Disaster Displaced People—Implementation of the Words into Action Guide on Disaster Displacement”<sup>1</sup>.

As set out in the [UNDRR Global Assessment Report 2019](#) (GAR 2019), unresolved vulnerabilities, rising exposure and proliferating, multiple hazard events continue to drive catastrophic loss of life, disrupt livelihoods and fuel new displacement – an additional 17.2 million people were internally displaced in 2018 alone as a result of climate-related disasters and natural hazards ([IDMC 2019](#)). It is estimated that people in least developed countries are, on average, six times more likely to be injured, lose

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<sup>1</sup>

their home, be displaced or evacuated, or require emergency assistance, than those in high-income countries.

Disaster displacement is thereby often a result of a multitude of inter-connected factors. These include climate change and environmental degradation driven by unsustainable economic growth and poor development practices, which may further lead to conflict over water, land and other natural resources. Health disasters and their effects within our global interconnected systems are another rising concern given the large number of people already displaced and expected to be displaced in the future by the COVID

implementation of the strategies and, last but not least, encourage risk informed investment across all sectors to prevent the creation of new risks.

In the following, this submission sets out issues and challenges, as well as available solutions and lessons learned from the implementation of the Sendai Framework to address disaster displacement.

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, displacement may exacerbate vulnerabilities by exposing people to new risks and challenges such as inequality, climate change, poverty, under/unemployment and fast-paced urbanization. Fleeing home to escape the impacts of a hazard is often a decision between life and death. But disaster displacement – which includes evacuation and, in some cases, planned relocation following environmental stressors – often has severe and long-lasting social, economic and legal impacts, particularly in protracted contexts. Climate change effects and poor natural resource management, leading to the gradual erosion of livelihoods, are often decisive factors for alternative household strategies, to diversify risks of environmental stressors and disaster impacts. Fast-paced and unplanned urbanization comes with new risks. Employment opportunities for displaced people are often confined to poor-quality daily labour, which has a negative impact on household budgets, savings and spending, and compounds their ability to further manage risks and cope with negative shocks. In addition, displaced people are often obliged to settle in high risk areas – such as floodplains, subsiding land or hillside slopes – which are less controlled and often the most affordable yet hazard-prone areas. This further increases the likelihood of secondary displacement risk.

The Sendai Framework pays due attention to the systemic complexities of population movements as drivers of risk and to the opportunities for strengthened resilience. It highlights consequences of disasters in terms of displacement, but equally acknowledges the contributions that people displaced by disaster can make – through remittances, networks, skills and investments – in addressing root

In line with the UN Secretary General's focus on prevention, the Sendai Framework, puts a strong emphasis on disaster risk management as opposed to managing disasters and emergencies. It promotes increased investment in preparedness and risk reduction in order to prevent and reduce disaster displacement and mitigate its devastating impacts. The Sendai Framework reiterates the responsibility of States for preventing and reducing disaster risk and encourages *“the adoption of policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities”*.<sup>4</sup>

The Sendai Framework also recognises that successful DRR is linked to sustainable development and global efforts to combat the adverse impacts of climate change through the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Likewise, the SDGs acknowledge DRR as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The integration of displacement risk reduction into broader DRR efforts also helps to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. A comprehensive response to disaster displacement risk, including across borders, requires collaboration among a wide range of actors in different domains, including urban planning, basic services, humanitarian assistance, migration management, human rights, climate change, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Of the seven Sendai Framework targets, Target (B) is particularly relevant for disaster displacement as





- c) Promoting monitoring and reporting of disaster displacement through the Sendai Framework Monitoring system, including development of national customary indicators**



seeking to build the capacity of their members to address it; the project to implement the WiA on Disaster Displacement (described above) directly responds to this need.

Regional examples of collaboration include the UNDRR and IOM collaboration in Asia Pacific, which led to a Regional Disaster Displacement Working Group. UNDRR and the Overseas

**f) New and creative financing solutions, including the role of the private and financial sector**

*The Panel could promote the critical importance of increased disaster risk reduction financing and integration of disaster and climate risk analysis into investment decisions in relevant policy fora, including the discussions on Financing for Development and climate finance at UNFCCC COP-26.*

As outlined above, disaster displacement is often caused by a multitude of interconnected hazards and risks. The economic impact of natural and man-made hazards plays a key role in people's decision to remain or leave their location. To effectively address increasingly systemic risks and reduce disaster displacement risk, new and innovative systemic solutions and approaches are required.

Reducing disaster

