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UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES BACKGROUND GUIDE 2016

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS





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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2016 National Model United Nations Conference in New York (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This year's staff is: Directors Jenna Biegel (Conference A) and Roland Römhildt (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Silvia Bedessi (Conference A) and Lidia Marseglia (Conference B). Jenna is a student of Geology, Environmental Studies, and Computer Science at Washington and Lee University in Virginia. This is her third year on staff and fifth year at NMUN•NY. Roland holds a M.A. in Political Science from Freie Universität Berlin, and is currently working on a PhD project in Political Theory. This is his third year on staff and he looks forward to accompanying intense deliberations at NMUN•NY. Silvia is finishing her degree in Political Science at the University of Florence, majoring in International Studies. This is her first year as staff at NMUN•NY and she looks forward to this new experience. Lidia is currently doing her B.A. in Political Science at the Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali in Rome. This is her second year on staff at NMUN•NY. She has previously served as an Assistant Director at NMUN•Rome.

The topics under discussion for UNHCR are:

- I. Transforming Refugee Camps into Sustainable Settlements in the Case of Protracted Displacement
- II. Strengthening the Capacity of Refugee Host Countries
- III. Addressing Temporary Displacements Due to Outbreaks and Epidemics

UNHCR is the agency with the primary purpose of protecting the welfare and rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Considering the current global crisis of forced migration (more people have been forcibly displaced in 2014 than in any other time on record), UNHCR is a crucial committee within the UN system. However, the agency suffers from financial constraints that harm the effectiveness of its work. Taking this into account, it is paramount that delegates review carefully the mandate of UNHCR, as well as its governance and the work it carries out to understand how the body works and what actions it can realistically undertake in today's climate.

We hope you will find this Background Guide useful as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We highly encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in-depth, as well as use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will submit a [position paper](#). Please take note of the [NMUN policies](#) on the website and in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct, dress code, sexual harassment, and the awards philosophy and evaluation method. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory.

The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, feel free to contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Human Rights & Humanitarian Affairs department, Moritz Müller (Conference A) and Claudia Sanchez (Conference B). You can reach either USG by contacting them at: usg_hr_ha@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations, and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Jenna Biegel, *Director*
Silvia Bedessi, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Roland Römhildt, *Director*
Lidia Marseglia, *Assistant Director*

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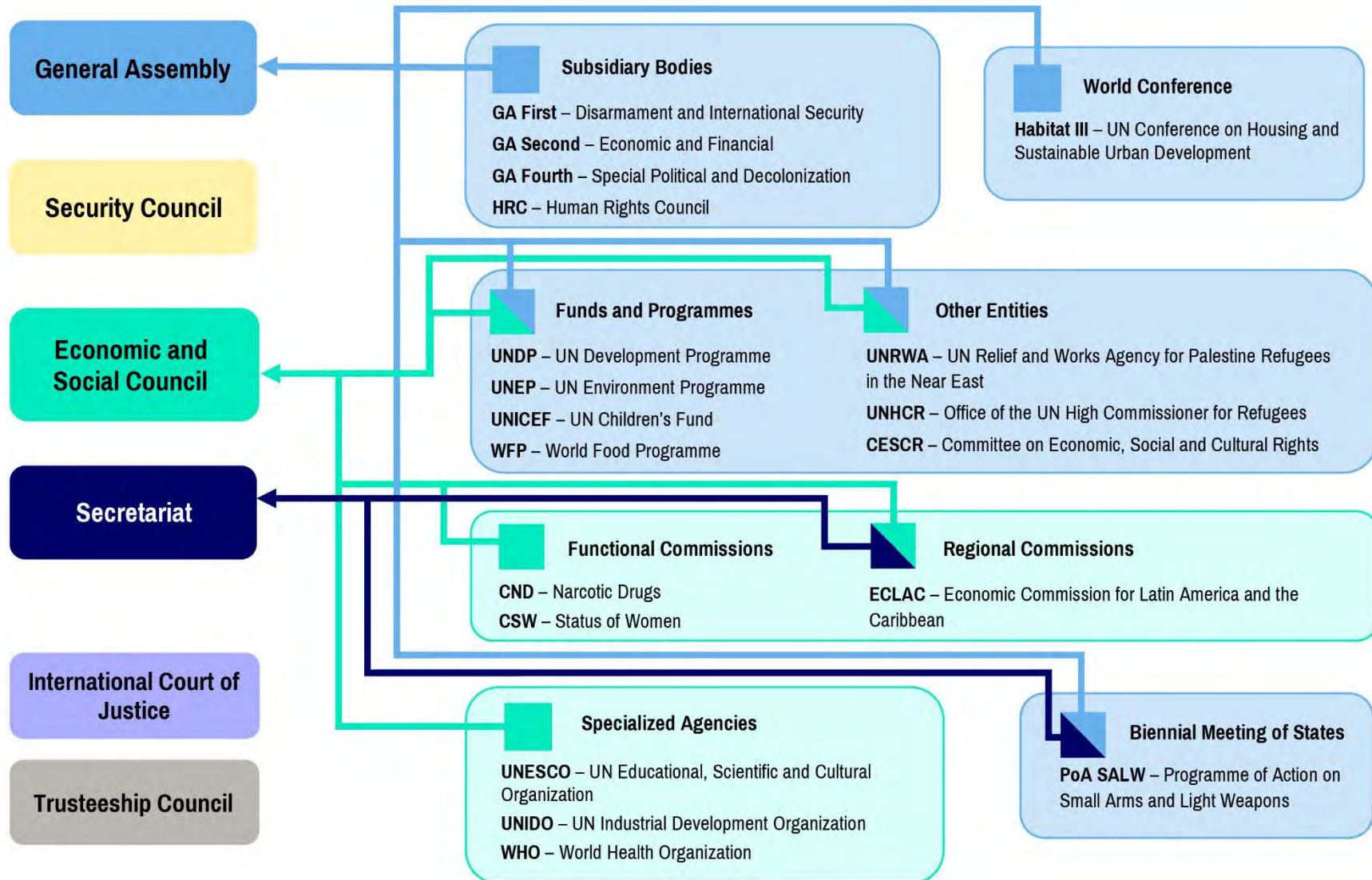


Abbreviations

AGD	Age, gender, and diversity
AU	African Union
CERF	Central Emergency Response
DHN	Digital Humanitarian Network
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EU	European Union
EWARS	Early Warning Alert and Response System
ExCom	Executive Committee
GA	General Assembly
GIS	Geographic information system
GOARN	Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
GPC	Global Protection Center
GSPs	Global Strategic Priorities
HRC	Human Rights Council
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RAHA	Refugee Affected and Hosting Area
SBTF	Stand-By Task Force
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees

United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the UN System simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system, to help understand the reportage and relationships between the entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN System.





Committee Overview

“While every refugee's story is different and their personal anguish, they all share a common thread of uncommon courage – the courage not only to survive, but to persevere and rebuild their shattered lives.”¹

Introduction

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the United Nations (UN) agency whose primary purpose is the protection of the welfare and rights of refugees.² It was established by the UN General Assembly (GA) in 1951 as a result of the aftermath of World War II.³ Initially, it had a three-year limited mandate to address the high number of Europeans who were displaced due to the war.⁴ At that time, UNHCR functioned with a 34-member staff.⁵

The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a programme and fund of the United Nations, reporting to the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly.

UNHCR faced its first significant emergency in 1956, following a violent Soviet intervention in Hungary, highlighting its essential role in delivering aid for all those fleeing the conflict and seeking refuge in neighboring countries.⁶ During the 1960s, the decolonization of Africa began, leading to involvement of UNHCR on several occasions, as was the case with crises in Asia and Latin America in the two following decades.⁷ Due to the necessity of UNHCR's continued work, the GA repeatedly extended UNHCR's mandate every three years until 2003, when it decided to prolong the mandate indefinitely, until the end of the refugee problem.⁸

Most of UNHCR's resources are dedicated to supporting operations at the field level, in order to address the needs of specific groups, such as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers.⁹ A refugee is a person who, reasonably fearing to be persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political conviction, has left the country of their nationality or habitual residence.¹⁰ Further, the definition states that they are unable to or, because of such fear, are not willing to return to the sovereign territory of the country they fled.¹¹ IDPs are defined as individuals who have had to flee their homes, but have not crossed an international border.¹² Asylum seekers are those who look for protection in a different country, but whose claim for refugee status has not been ascertained; 2014 saw the highest number of asylum seekers ever recorded.¹³ All of these groups can be categorized as victims of “forced migration”.¹⁴

UNHCR provides humanitarian aid in a variety of forms, including food and nutritional supplements, basic shelter, as well long-term accommodation such as camps or other forms of housing, cash assistance, and legal services.¹⁵ The agency is also involved in efforts to integrate or, if refugees are able to return, to reintegrate them.¹⁶ UNHCR also works closely with other agencies to address the needs of individuals who have been displaced due to natural

¹ UNHCR, *High Commissioner António Guterres starts work at UNHCR*, 2005.

² UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2015.

³ UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2015.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2015.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Implementing actions proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strengthen the capacity of his Office to carry out its mandate (A/RES/58/153)*, 2003.

⁹ UNHCR, *Executive Committee*, 2015.

¹⁰ *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967; UNHCR, *Refugees*, 2015.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2015.

¹³ Phillips, *Asylum Seekers and Refugees: What are the Facts?* 2013, p. 2; UNHCR, *World at War. UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement 2014*, 2015, p. 3.

¹⁴ Forced Migration Online, *What is forced migration?* 2012.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *Cash in Hand: Urban Refugees, the Right to Work and UNHCR's Advocacy Activities*, 2011; UNHCR, *Assistance*, 2015.

¹⁶ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014; UNHCR, *Assistance*, 2015.

disasters, as was the case in 2010 with the floods in Pakistan and the earthquake in Haiti.¹⁷ A further concern are stateless individuals, who lack an official nationality due to discrimination, state succession, or conflict.¹⁸

UNHCR evolved over the decades and since there has been a dramatic shift in the dialogue surrounding the situation of refugees.¹⁹ From 1945 to 1985, UNHCR focused mainly on the resettlement of refugees; however, after this period, as the causes of displacement varied, the agency shifted towards the concept of repatriation as a possible solution.²⁰ In 1993, the idea of providing refugees with the possibility to return safely to their homes by providing temporary protective measures, including establishing basic material conditions, was solidified.²¹ From the mid-1990s, the number of cases related to refugees seeking to return home expanded, as measures to resolve Cold War conflicts increased.²² As a result, UNHCR's role in reintegration evolved to include infrastructure and community development, as well as a focus on the importance of reconciliation and peacebuilding in affected communities.²³

Governance, Structure and Membership

At present, UNHCR employs over 9,300 national and international staff members working in 125 countries, including in Geneva, Switzerland, where UNHCR's headquarters are located.²⁴ Additionally, UNHCR has increased its budget from \$300,000 in its first year to almost \$7 billion in 2015, and it now addresses the needs of over 46 million people worldwide.²⁵ UNHCR falls under the UN's Programmes and Funds, reports directly to the General Assembly (GA), and is governed by the Member States that make up its Executive Committee (ExCom).²⁶ The ExCom approves the agency's annual program priorities and budget.²⁷ Member States are elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to become members of the ExCom, and are selected according to equitable geographical allocation.²⁸ At its creation, the ExCom comprised 24 members; the membership has since grown to 98 Member States.²⁹ The ExCom reports directly to the GA Third Committee, and it must follow directives issued by either the GA or ECOSOC.³⁰ The ExCom meets once per year, usually in October, to review financial matters for the coming year, to give advice to the High Commissioner, to authorize appeals for funds, and to approve biennial targets.³¹ In 1995, the ExCom created a Standing Committee, which meets three times per year to discuss the work of the body as a whole, and any new conflicts to be addressed.³² The current High Commissioner, António Guterres, is in charge of the control of UNHCR and its steering; he must work in close collaboration with the Deputy High Commissioner and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and Operations to oversee the work of the agency's secretariat and its regional offices.³³

UNHCR's budget rests on four pillars: refugees, stateless people, reintegration programs, and IDPs.³⁴ This translates to a revised projected budget of over \$6.2 billion for 2015.³⁵ The budget stems almost entirely from voluntary donations by Member States, intergovernmental institutions, corporations, foundations, and individuals worldwide.³⁶ As a means of acquiring these donations, UNHCR releases an annual Global Appeal that provides detailed information regarding the major areas of concern for UNHCR, as well as supplementary appeals that address

¹⁷ UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2015.

¹⁸ UNHCR, *Stateless People*, 2015.

¹⁹ Chimni, *From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation: Towards a Critical History of Durable Solutions to Refugee Problems*, 2004, p. 54.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Macrae, *Aiding Peace...and War: UNHCR, Returnee Reintegration, and the Relief-Development Debate*, 1999.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2015.

²⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global figures*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2015.

²⁶ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2014-15*, 2014, p. 254.

²⁷ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010, p. 2.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁹ UNHCR, *ExCom Members and How to Apply*, 2015.

³⁰ UNHCR, *ExCom Mandate and Statute*, 2015.

³¹ Ibid.; UNHCR, *ExCom Structure and Meetings*, 2015.

³² Ibid.

³³ UNHCR, *Governance and Organization*, 2015.

³⁴ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Finances and Budget*, 2014, p. 5.

³⁵ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update - Identifying needs and funding requirements*, 2015, p. 105.

³⁶ UNHCR, *Donors*, 2015.

specific situations worldwide.³⁷ Included in this budget are contributions from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); it provides funding in the case of situations that require an immediate response, such as a natural disaster or violent conflict.³⁸ A major challenge for UNHCR's work is the ever-rising funding gap, which corresponded to 45% of the financial requirements in 2013; this means that 45% of the expenditure that is planned based on a needs-based approach cannot be financed.³⁹ In addition, humanitarian crises are not foreseeable in advance, which makes planning immensely difficult, especially as the exact amount of donations is also unknown at the beginning of each year.⁴⁰ Therefore, UNHCR applies a "phased approach", which adjusts planning and funding throughout the fiscal period.⁴¹ To address the growing difficulties in effectively and needs-based financing of humanitarian work, the High Commissioner has proposed another emergency response fund for large-scale crises and the inclusion of basic human security issues in development financing.⁴²

Mandate, Function and Powers

The basis for UNHCR's mandate is Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which specifically recognizes the right of all individuals to seek asylum in another country.⁴³ The founding document of UNHCR is GA resolution 428 (V), known as the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (1950).⁴⁴ Here, UNHCR's mandate is defined as: "providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and [...] private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities."⁴⁵

Other fundamental documents for UNHCR include the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which defines the term "refugee" as well as the rights and obligations of refugees; and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which expanded the 1951 Convention and UNHCR's mandate to include refugees from conflicts occurring after 1951.⁴⁶ UNHCR's mandate also includes other groups, such as stateless people, as defined in the 1954 *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, and the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.⁴⁷ While its mandate does not extend specifically to IDPs, UNHCR's expertise in displacement has resulted in the gradual inclusion of IDPs in its work.⁴⁸ The 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, adopted by ECOSOC, outline the rights and protections for IDPs.⁴⁹ They are paradigmatic for UNHCR.⁵⁰ In 2007, after a series of inter-agency consultations, the ExCom adopted the policy framework and implementation strategy on UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response to situations of internal displacement.⁵¹ The framework emphasizes the agency's primary responsibility to refugees and stipulates that aid to IDPs must be given in collaboration with national governments, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other UN agencies.⁵² The mandate of UNHCR was further expanded in the 2011 ExCom report entitled *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters*.⁵³ The report emphasizes UNHCR's primary focus on conflict-related disasters, and that its role in natural disaster relief

³⁷ UNHCR, *The Global Appeal and Supplementary Appeals*, 2015.

³⁸ UNHCR, *United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)*, 2015.

³⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update - Identifying needs and funding requirements*, 2015, p. 96.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 102, 104.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UNHCR, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 2010.

⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ UNHCR, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 2010; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2015.

⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 1954; UNHCR, *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, 1961; UNHCR, *Stateless People*, 2015.

⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2015.

⁴⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/53/Add.2 (1998))*, 1998.

⁵⁰ UN OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 2004.

⁵¹ UNHCR Executive Committee, *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response to situations of internal displacement: Policy framework and implementation strategy*, 2007.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ UNHCR Executive Committee, *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters*, 2011.

should be limited to pre-existing refugee or displacement operations.⁵⁴ Notably, paragraph seven of this report draws attention to the framework’s implications for state sovereignty, particularly when it comes to natural disasters.⁵⁵

UNCHR has adopted documents laying out policies to ensure that various refugee groups’ needs are considered and that each individual has the right to participate in decisions that may affect their lives.⁵⁶ As the number of refugees has grown, UNHCR has increased its efforts to include a wide range of protective measures, including those set in place for the reintegration of refugees.⁵⁷ Reintegration is defined as being “virtually synonymous with ‘sustainable’ return, which implies a situation where a constructive relationship between returnees, civil society and the state is consolidated.”⁵⁸ From this point, relief efforts have broadened to include sustainable development measures in regards to the reintegration of refugees, as well as a focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in areas of the world affected by internal and external conflicts.⁵⁹ It is in this context that the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in September 2015, are relevant for UNHCR, particularly Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries, and its Targets, especially Target 7 of Goal 10 on sustainable migration policies.⁶⁰ Other relevant Goals include Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 11 on cities and human settlements and Goal 13 on climate change and its impact.⁶¹

Emergency response constitutes one of the key functions of UNHCR, which continually trains personnel to respond to situations as needed, and has the ability to mobilize over 300 skilled individuals in less than 72 hours.⁶² UNHCR has gathered stockpiles of required items in Copenhagen and Dubai that can be used in the event of an emergency.⁶³ UNHCR works through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to deliver humanitarian assistance in emergencies.⁶⁴ IASC’s secretariat, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, coordinates relief efforts among major UN and non-UN humanitarian partners and seeks to effectively administer aid, as well as highlight areas of need in a given situation through the Cluster Approach.⁶⁵ Clusters consist of UN agencies and NGOs that deliver humanitarian aid according to their expertise.⁶⁶ UNHCR leads the clusters on shelter, protection, and camp coordination and management.⁶⁷

Partnerships with civil society are essential to providing the services and resources needed to address all aspects of UNHCR’s mandate.⁶⁸ Local NGOs partner with UNHCR to ensure that aid is delivered effectively and in a timely manner.⁶⁹ UNHCR hosts an annual meeting that invites experts in the field, including national and international NGOs, to partake in a constructive dialogue on the topic of refugees.⁷⁰ Further, UNHCR participates in the Global Humanitarian Platform, a group of UN agencies and NGOs committed to the coordination of relief efforts, which endorsed the 2007 *Principles of Partnership*, outlining the importance of collaboration in responding to humanitarian crises.⁷¹ Partnerships facilitate funding and monitoring of situations through the pooling of resources.⁷²

⁵⁴ UNHCR Executive Committee, *UNHCR’s role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters*, 2011, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ UNHCR Executive Committee, *Age, Gender and Diversity Approach (EC/63/SC/CRP.14)*, 2012; UNHCR, *UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy: Working With People and Communities for Equality and Protection*, 2011.

⁵⁷ Macrae, *Aiding Peace...and War: UNHCR, Returnee Reintegration, and the Relief-Development Debate*, 1999.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² UNHCR, *Emergency Response*, 2015.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR’s Role in IASC Humanitarian Reform Initiatives and in the Strengthening of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Response to Internally Displaced Persons Situations*, 2005.

⁶⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)*, 2015

⁶⁶ UN OCHA, *What is the Cluster Approach?*

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ UNHCR, *Non-Governmental Organizations*, 2015. UNHCR, *Partners*, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ International Council of Volunteer Agencies, *Humanitarian Reform: Basic Information Leaflet Series Principles of Partnership*, 2010.

⁷² Ibid.

One example is the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, where several UN agencies work with local NGOs and governments to ensure that children can access educational services in times of crises.⁷³ UNHCR works with Member States to promote the effective application of existing international standards, as well as to enhance existing refugee policies, in areas that require improvement. One example is the *Ten-Point Plan of Action for Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration for Countries Along the Eastern and Southeastern Borders of European Union Member States*.⁷⁴ UNHCR also works closely with NGOs to change the way asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees are treated in host countries.⁷⁵

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNHCR held its 66th ExCom session between 5-9 October 2015.⁷⁶ Simultaneously, a meeting of the High-level Segment on the Afghan refugee situation occurred.⁷⁷ The ExCom mainly made decisions on financial matters, especially concerning adjustments due to rise in crises, particularly in Europe, and the fiscal gap of UNHCR; it also appealed for more generous donations by the international community.⁷⁸ Further, the issue of the “mega-crises” of Syria and Iraq, were debated; of note, the ExCom general debate was comprised of 125 delegates with 80 being active participants speaking on the floor.⁷⁹

The UN’s *Strategic Framework* for 2014-2015 highlights UNHCR’s goal in devising new strategies to work with Member States and organizations to find lasting solutions for persons of concern, as well as its objective of strengthening international protections, enhancing the capacity of host countries to receive asylum seekers, and further expanding and developing lasting emergency response capabilities.⁸⁰ The framework includes clear indicators of achievement in relation to its objectives, and enumerates UNHCR’s areas of focus for the 2014-2015 period.⁸¹ UNHCR has also established Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs) for 2014-2015, which provide a blueprint for how UNHCR will carry out its operations around the globe in accordance with international standards.⁸² The GSPs operationalize the *Strategic Framework*, detail the indicators assessing the impact of each area of focus, and draw attention to areas for global engagement and partnership possibilities.⁸³ GSPs for 2014-2015 include: reducing statelessness, improved birth registration, reducing discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence, as well as mortality, morbidity and malnutrition.⁸⁴ They also encompass improving shelter, the participation of people of concern, and building coexistence with hosting communities; all issues which touch upon the topics of this Background Guide.⁸⁵ UNHCR’s strategic planning considers every major area worldwide and gives detailed information on projected needs for refugee programs, statelessness programs, IDP help and reintegration projects.⁸⁶

The Middle East remain a geographic area of priority for UNHCR in 2015, while the situation in Europe has been given special emphasis.⁸⁷ Topical issues include, inter alia, improved emergency response protection, the registration of refugees and mixed migrations, preventing sexual and gender-based violence, and international-burden sharing and recognizing the contributions of host communities.⁸⁸ Furthermore, UNHCR launched a campaign in 2014 to end

⁷³ UNHCR, *Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies*, 2015.

⁷⁴ UNHCR, *Advocacy*, 2015; UNHCR, *Ten-Point Plan of Action for Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration for Countries Along the Eastern and Southeastern Borders of European Union Member States*, 2007; UNHCR, *Protection*, 2015.

⁷⁵ UNHCR, *Asylum and Migration*, 2015.

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-sixth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/1154)*, 2015, p. 9.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2014-2015*, 2012.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*, 2014.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁸⁶ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015*, 2014; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update - Identifying needs and funding requirements*, 2015

⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*, 2014.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-sixth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/1154)*, 2015, p. 10.

statelessness within a decade, as there are still 10 million people worldwide without citizenship.⁸⁹ Finally, UNHCR has set a priority of ameliorating the shelter and settlement situation of forcibly displaced people, and has developed nine guiding principles to this end.⁹⁰ It is in the context of this undertaking that more sustainable alternatives to refugee camps (for instance sustainable settlements that are closely linked with local hosting communities) are discussed, as camps often impose limitations on the rights and freedoms of their inhabitants.⁹¹ UNHCR has undergone major reform efforts in recent years to maximize efficiency and address gaps in areas that require attention.⁹² The *Age, Gender and Diversity Approach* has led to significant changes in the way in which UNHCR and its partners interact with individuals fleeing their homes.⁹³ Additionally, new areas of focus have been introduced, such as addressing the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersex refugees.⁹⁴

Conclusion

As the global community faces the worst crises of forced displacement in history, millions worldwide will continue to require the aid of UNHCR.⁹⁵ Only ten countries: Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Iraq, and Eritrea, are the source of 77% of the world's refugee population.⁹⁶ UNHCR is continuously evolving to meet the needs of refugees, yet faces increasing challenges due to the dimensions of the task.⁹⁷ UNHCR plays a vital part in humanitarian affairs and remains essential in providing life-saving resources for individuals who have been forced to flee their homes.⁹⁸ While the responsibility to address IDPs remains primarily at the local and national level, the increasing number of IDPs around the world requires a collaborative effort by the international community to ensure their protection in the event of a conflict or immediate crisis.⁹⁹ A good example are the cases of Syrian and Iraqi refugees, displaced due to civil war.¹⁰⁰ Addressing the needs of refugees and stateless individuals necessitates a similar approach, given the limited resources available within many of the Member States receiving refugees.¹⁰¹ It is in this context that one of the challenges for UNHCR's future strategic management becomes apparent: the increasing number of protracted conflicts calls for more durable solutions than can be facilitated by two-year plans and insufficient financing.¹⁰²

⁸⁹ UNHCR, *A special Report. Ending Statelessness within 10 Years*, 2014; UNHCR, *UNHCR launches 10-year global campaign to end statelessness*, 2014.

⁹⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter. A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 11.

⁹¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014, pp. 4, 12.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/67/12)*, 2012.

⁹³ UNHCR, Executive Committee, *Age, Gender and Diversity Approach (EC/63/SC/CRP.14)*, 2012.

⁹⁴ UNHCR, *The Protection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*, 2010.

⁹⁵ UNHCR, *World at War. UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement 2014*, 2015.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update - Identifying needs and funding requirements*, 2015; UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2015.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 1998.

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR, *World at War. UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement 2014*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2015.

¹⁰² Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, *Synthesis report United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Executive Summary*, 2014, p. 3.



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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2010). *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* [Report]. Retrieved 15 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c39e1.html>

This document contains not only the Statute, but also a helpful introductory note on UNHCR's history and membership. Delegates should begin their research by reviewing the Statute, as it contains integral information in regards to the function of the committee. The Statute details the rules of procedure for UNHCR, its mandate and functions, and the structure of the organization. Through this source, delegates will gain a better understanding of why this body was created, as well as the intended work of the body and the constraints within which it must function.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Executive Committee* [Website]. Retrieved 15 August 2015 from <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c83.html>

This Website provides a detailed explanation of ExCom, its history, and its role. It also provides links to all major forms of documentation produced by ExCom, including documents that have been submitted by the Standing Committee. In addition, it provides a better understanding for delegates of the process Member States must undergo to become members of ExCom, as well as of the role of observers in the annual meeting.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Partners* [Website]. Retrieved 14 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c296.html>

In order to adequately address the needs of millions of refugees around the world, UNHCR must work with a wide variety of partners. This resource will allow for a more in-depth understanding of the various partnerships utilized by UNHCR, including those with NGOs, private sector partners, and the European Union. Included in this source is an overview of the guidelines utilized for effective partnerships, as well as a comprehensive directory of all UNHCR partners.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update – Identifying needs and funding requirements*. Retrieved 16 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5461e5f30.html>

This resource should serve as a source of information regarding the current work of UNHCR. It is a periodic publication of UNHCR that notes all current projects underway worldwide, subdivided by region. Moreover, it contains an overview of the current budget, as well as detailed information regarding global strategic priorities. Finally, the Global Appeal Update explains how to begin addressing statelessness, the importance of self-reliance, and the means through which to establish durable solutions for refugees worldwide.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *World at War. UNHCR Global Trends Forced Displacement 2014* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: <http://unhcr.org/556725c69.html>

This Report is essential in understanding the current situation and recent dramatic global changes in the populations of concern for UNHCR. It offers a compact overview on key figures and their geographical distribution, thus ensuring comparability. Demographic data and other information on the different concerned groups are also listed in detail. At the end of the report, delegates can find a table, which lists all people of concern for UNHCR by category and according to country or territory of stay. A second table lists the population of concern according to countries and territories of origin. By reading the report, delegates will get a more profound understanding of the dimensions of global forced migration, asylum seeking and statelessness. Further, it will enhance their factual knowledge through the detailed examples and case studies. Overall, the report presents, in a compact manner, all the challenges UNHCR is facing at the moment.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Executive Committee. (2011). *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters* [Report]. Standing Committee, 51st meeting. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4df08ba39.pdf>

This report highlights why it is important for UNHCR to focus on its existing mandate for refugees in conflict-related situations. It clearly outlines operating differences in IDP versus refugee situations, and the added complexity of engaging in natural disaster relief. The document establishes that UNHCR's intervention with IDPs and natural disasters will be limited and strictly in support of national governments or other agencies, in order to respect national sovereignty and

use its limited resources efficiently. Delegates will find this document useful to establish the scope of their discussion and ensure they understand existing protocol and UNHCR's unique role in the IASC Cluster Approach, as decided by its governing body.

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I. Transforming Refugee Camps into Sustainable Settlements in the Case of Protracted Displacement

*“Refugees are people like anyone else, like you and me. They led ordinary lives before becoming displaced, and their biggest dream is to be able to live normally again.”*¹⁰³

Introduction

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), almost 60 million people in the world are facing forced displacement.¹⁰⁴ Among them, 19.5 million are refugees who flee their country of nationality due to persecution, conflicts, or human rights violations.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, 38.2 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs), forced to abandon their home for the same reasons but who do not trespass their country’s borders.¹⁰⁶ UNHCR is the United Nations (UN) agency in charge of protecting these refugees; however, being the most competent in addressing displacement, it also protects IDPs, which were not initially included in its mandate.¹⁰⁷ Many refugees and IDPs today live in camps, which are “any purpose-built [...] or spontaneous settlement where [they] receive assistance and services from government and humanitarian agencies.”¹⁰⁸ UNHCR views refugee camps as a temporary answer, but they are often the only solution for many refugees and IDPs who must live in camps for years, prolonging their dependency on humanitarian aid.¹⁰⁹ Though these refugee camps provide much needed humanitarian assistance immediately after, or in response to, a crisis, they also cause multiple hardships for their residents, such as restriction on freedom of movement, food insecurity, poor shelter, and sanitation.¹¹⁰

Concerned by the growing amount of displacement globally and its protracted nature caused by new and ongoing conflicts, UNHCR promotes the adoption of durable solutions, namely repatriation, local integration, and resettlement, to help those displaced progress towards self-sufficiency.¹¹¹ These solutions are not always equally feasible; when the return of a refugee or IDP to the country of origin is not possible, UNHCR promotes alternatives to camps that allow displaced people the ability to exercise rights in the host community and to achieve a “sense of social and cultural belonging.”¹¹² These alternative paths are known as sustainable settlements. Consequently, UNHCR advocates that camps must be phased out or transformed into sustainable settlements.¹¹³ This form of settlement allows their inhabitants to fulfil their needs without jeopardizing the environment or the well-being of others in the community, being nonetheless bonded to the national development framework, and reducing the need for humanitarian assistance.¹¹⁴

International and Regional Framework

The *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), adopted by General Assembly (GA) resolution 429 (V), and its *Protocol* (1967) contain fundamental principles regarding refugees, recognizing their right to assistance without being discriminated against and their duty to follow the host state laws and policies.¹¹⁵ The Convention states that contracting states, namely those committing themselves to abide by the Convention irrespective of its entry into force, must guarantee freedom of movement to refugees living lawfully in their territory as well as the

¹⁰³ Ban, *Secretary General’s Message on World Refugee Day*, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ UNHCR, *Facts and Figures About Refugees*, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UNHCR, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 1998.

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR, *Facts and Figures About Refugees*, 2015; *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2015; UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Public Health (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014.

¹¹¹ UN DPI, *21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’: Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told (GA/SHC/4024)*, 2011; Brookings Institution, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010; UNHCR, *Durable Solutions*, 2015.

¹¹² Brookings Institution, *IDPs in Protracted Displacement: is Local Integration a Solution?* 2011; UNHCR, *The Benefits of Belonging*, 2011; UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014.

¹¹³ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014; Benton-Short & Short, *Cities and Nature*, 2013.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

same treatment accorded to nationals in the field of elementary education.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Convention calls upon contracting states to give refugees a treatment comparable to that given to “nationals of a foreign country” in the fields of employment, self-employment, and liberal professions, which are undertaken by a worker that is not “an agent of the state or a salaried employee.”¹¹⁷ Following a similar path, the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998) discourage camp confinement, granting IDPs freedom of movement and the right to an adequate standard of living, deriving from access to “essential food and potable water; basic house and shelter; appropriate clothing; and essential medical services and sanitation.”¹¹⁸ The Principles promote empowerment of women, access to primary education, and IDPs’ right to be involved in economic activities.¹¹⁹ The Principles have also inspired national legislation such as Colombia’s law n.387, which envisages the participation of IDPs in urban and rural employment programs; similarly, Bosnian law grants IDPs the right to free elementary education and training.¹²⁰

In recent years, other documents echoed these principles: Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 29/16 of 2015, promotes the inclusion of Syrian refugee women in decision-making; HRC resolution 25/17 of 2014 discussed *Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living*; and GA resolution 67/149 of 2013, promotes international cooperation to achieve durable solutions and tackle the financial crisis.¹²¹ Most recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new set of goals following the path outlined by the 2000 United Nations (UN) *Millennium Declaration* and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), were adopted in September 2015.¹²² GA resolution 69/315 of 2015 promotes displaced people’s empowerment and host communities’ resilience at clause 29, and it outlines which of the SDGs – Goals 2-8 – are fundamental for those displaced, promoting food security and well-being for all, access to water and sanitation, quality education and gender equality, as well as “inclusive and sustainable economic growth” and employment.¹²³

At the regional level, the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (2009), also known as the *Kampala Convention*, was “the first legal instrument of its kind in the world,” with provisions on States Parties’ obligations to protect their internally displaced citizens, foster durable solutions for IDPs, and promote their involvement in decision-making.¹²⁴ A similar scope inspired the Common European Asylum System of the European Union (EU), based on common standards for asylum and on strong cooperation among EU and non-EU countries.¹²⁵ However, after the revision of the Dublin Regulation in 2013, EU entry-point countries are solely responsible for asylum seekers; such a provision is considered unfair by some states, especially as not all EU members follow the same approach to migration.¹²⁶ For this reason, it has proven extremely difficult for EU members to implement stronger coordination mechanisms, which would equally benefit refugees and the EU as a whole, as non entry-point Member States also host refugees.¹²⁷

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951, arts. 12-26; Hague Conference on Private International Law, *What is the Difference Between a Contracting State and a State Party to a Convention?* 2015.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, arts. 17-19; Hathaway, *The Rights of Refugees Under International Law*, 2005.

¹¹⁸ UNHCR, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 1998, principles 12-18.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, principles 22-23.

¹²⁰ Brookings Institution, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008.

¹²¹ UN HRC, *The Grave and Deteriorating Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic* (A/HRC/RES/29/16), 2015; UN HRC, *Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living* (A/HRC/RES/25/17), 2014; UN General Assembly, *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (A/RES/67/149), 2013.

¹²² UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/55/L.2), 2000; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.

¹²³ UN General Assembly, *Draft Outcome Document of the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda* (A/RES/69/315), 2015.

¹²⁴ UNHCR, *African Union Adopts Major Convention to Protect and Assist Internally Displaced*, 2009; AU, *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, 2009.

¹²⁵ European Union, *Common European Asylum System*, 2015; European Union, *Policy Plan on Asylum: An Integrated Approach to Protection Across the EU*, 2008.

¹²⁶ Park, *Europe’s Migration Crisis*, 2015.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Role of the International System

The international community considers national governments chiefly responsible for finding durable solutions for forcibly displaced people, with international organizations acting only in a “complementary role.”¹²⁸ Yet, in performing their activities, humanitarian and development actors, ranging from UN agencies to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), work collaboratively to foster a rights-based approach that allows refugees and IDPs to make conscious choices about their future, values the needs of women, young people, and people with disabilities, and also incorporates the perspective of host communities.¹²⁹

In promoting refugee and IDP rights, UNHCR works together with other agencies, such as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the UN Development Programme, the World Health Organization, the UN Children’s Fund, and the UN Human Settlements Programme.¹³⁰ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), focusing on “humanitarian financing, preparedness and resilience,” brings such UN bodies together to coordinate efforts with standing invitees, such as the International Organization for Migration, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank.¹³¹ For example, UNFPA provides UNHCR with technical assistance supplying “dignity kits, reproductive health kits and equipment, and medical personnel to assist affected communities”.¹³² UNHCR benefited from the World Bank’s experience in social welfare to address the needs of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and facilitate investments in local service delivery.¹³³ In recent years, IASC issued the Transformative Agenda and the related protocols, outlining guidelines and parameters for enhanced collective humanitarian response, strengthening the role of the humanitarian coordinator, the leader responsible for harmonizing international efforts and making them efficient.¹³⁴

Key to collaboration is the implementation of the cluster approach, in which UNHCR plays a key role, to ensure greater coordination and reduce humanitarian response fragmentation. UNHCR is the Global Cluster Lead Agency of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), connecting UN bodies, international organizations, and NGOs, such as Save the Children and Oxfam.¹³⁵ The GPC aims at facilitating camp management and access to land, and at promoting durable solutions for displaced people.¹³⁶ The international community also strives to take into consideration the input of the host community, for example in Lebanon, where municipalities are consulted to counter the Syrian refugee crisis and to include refugee informal peri-urban areas in urban planning, promoting community projects on housing and on waste, sewage, and water collection that successfully ended in 2014.¹³⁷ However, the increasing number of refugees in Lebanon has hindered service delivery and prompted continued international support to the government to improve refugee living conditions, showing the importance of and need for even greater-strengthened partnerships between local and international actors.¹³⁸

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR identifies three possible durable solutions for protracted displacement and sustainable settlements: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement in a third country.¹³⁹ These solutions aim at achieving the voluntary and safe return of refugees to their country of origin; the recognition of their rights in the host country and

¹²⁸ Brookings Institution, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ UNHCR, *UN Sister Organizations*, 2015; UNRWA, *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees*, 2007.

¹³¹ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*, 1991; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Membership*, 2015; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Priorities*, 2015.

¹³² UNFPA, *Crisis in Syria*, 2015.

¹³³ UNDP, *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015; Brosnan & Gray Meral, *Beyond Refugee Camps: Exploring More Sustainable Alternatives in Lebanon and Uganda*, 2014.

¹³⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Transformative Agenda*, 2015.

¹³⁵ UN OCHA, *Cluster Coordination*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014; Global Protection Cluster, *Who We Are*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Delivering as One: Report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel (A/61/583)*, 2006.

¹³⁶ Global Protection Cluster, *Housing, Land and Property*, 2015.

¹³⁷ UN-HABITAT, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update – Lebanon*, 2015; Good Practices for Urban Refugees, *Urban Case Study: Syria Crisis (Lebanon & Jordan)*, 2015.

¹³⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Lebanon – Institutional and Community Support Update*, 2014.

¹³⁹ UNHCR, *Durable Solutions*, 2015.

the development of strong socio-economic ties with the host community; and the permanent transfer of refugees from the country of first asylum to another state, different from the one of origin.¹⁴⁰ UNHCR's Policy on Alternatives to Camps promotes the establishment of refugee camps only as a temporary solution, favoring their quick phasing out or, at least, their integration into the local socio-economic system.¹⁴¹ While the 2014 UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps recognizes the importance of camps in the initial phase of a refugee crisis, when it is urgent to identify individuals with specific needs and to provide immediate assistance, it highlights restrictions posed by camps on the enjoyment of rights and freedoms.¹⁴² The UNHCR's Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps monitors' deficiencies and gaps in 92 operational camps and outlines future strategies to enhance preparedness, community-based protection, and international partnerships.¹⁴³

More specifically, the Policy on Alternatives to Camps intersects with UNHCR's Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter and Global Strategy for Livelihoods, each respectively aiming at integrating settlement strategies into planning processes to guarantee refugees safe and adequate housing, and at helping displaced people exploit their skills towards self-reliance.¹⁴⁴ UNHCR promotes the right to work and the right to development, defined as the right to "self-determination, [...] equality of opportunity" and to the full enjoyment of civil, economic, and socio-cultural rights.¹⁴⁵ UNHCR's guiding principles are: equity, sustainability, accessibility, community empowerment, and the Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach.¹⁴⁶ The AGD approach aims at mainstreaming inclusive practices into international and national policies, as happened in Panama, Colombia, and Brazil thanks to the Participatory Assessment Tool, used worldwide by UNHCR to value the input of vulnerable groups, such as women, young and older people, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.¹⁴⁷

Overview on Refugee Camps and Alternatives to Camps

Camps are useful tools for the efficient delivery of goods and services to displaced people, but they often present worrisome problems that affect refugees' well-being.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the lack of access to services available outside camps and of integration in the national labor market, many camp residents suffer from food insecurity, poor sanitation and health conditions, and limited access to water – all problems intensified by overcrowding, which makes the construction of new camps necessary as more refugees continue to arrive.¹⁴⁹ Severe malnutrition is so widespread that, among the sites surveyed by the UNHCR Public Health 2014 Annual Global Review, just less than 30% were successful in reducing stunting, and not a single site met anemia standards.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, data on access to water is alarming, as only 40% of the African and less than 20% of the Asian sites met the standard of 20 liters of water per person per day.¹⁵¹ Moreover, providing water in a newly established refugee camp is a challenging task.¹⁵² As shown by the Ab Gadam camp in Chad, created in 2013, it only guarantees 10 liters a day per refugee.¹⁵³ Sanitation is also insufficient in many camps, with 30% lacking "adequate waste disposal and latrine facilities."¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities*, 2004; Crisp, *The Local Integration and Local Settlement of Refugees: A Conceptual and Historical Analysis*, 2004; UNHCR, *Resettlement – A New Beginning in a Third Country*, 2015.

¹⁴¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ UNHCR, *UNHCR Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps*, 2015.

¹⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014.

¹⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014; OHCHR, *Background on the Right to Development*, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014.

¹⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming - Forward Plan 2011-2016*, 2011; UNHCR, *Age, Gender, and Diversity Best Practice Compilation - Bureau for the Americas*, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014; Asylum Access, *Global Refugee Work Rights Report*, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR Public Health 2014 Annual Global Review*, 2015.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² UNHCR, *Liquid Treasure: the Challenge of Providing Drinking Water in a New Refugee Camp*, 2013.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Public Health 2014 Annual Global Review*, 2015.

Moreover, acute upper and lower respiratory infections are the main cause of mortality in camps; their diffusion is facilitated by overcrowding, suboptimal living conditions, malnutrition, and harsh climatic conditions.¹⁵⁵ Reproductive health problems are also extremely concerning, with eclampsia, a complication of pregnancy, being the main cause of death among refugee women in the Kenyan Dadaab camp.¹⁵⁶ This is due to the lack of skilled obstetrics and of drugs necessary to counter such pregnancy complications.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, while informed consent for procedures is fundamental to ensure adequate care for women, it can be hindered by language barriers and by traditional customs that require the approval of a family member to proceed.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, difficulty in accessing funds for camp management cause the continuation and exacerbation of the problems that camp residents face.¹⁵⁹ In 2014, contributions to UNHCR came, in decreasing order, from governments, non-UN international organizations, private donors, and the UN, but “the gap between needs and resources has widened to alarming levels.”¹⁶⁰ In fact, most financial aid decreases within 18 months after the emergency, making it more difficult for organizations like the World Food Programme to continue providing the same amount of food rations to refugees.¹⁶¹ This shows how donor fatigue, resulting from donors’ focus on other priorities, is fundamental to address, especially when emergencies are transform into prolonged crises that need continuous funding.¹⁶²

Though alternatives to camps are not always feasible immediately after a refugee crisis, they are more sustainable long-term, effectively addressing protection gaps and exploiting refugee potential.¹⁶³ The transformation of camps into sustainable settlements is a complex process that requires more funding in the early phases to maximize later efficiencies; however, the process was slowed down in the past because governments favored repatriation or resettlement as ways to avoid potential environmental harm, competition for jobs, and land disputes in their countries.¹⁶⁴ To counter this tendency, local integration strategies need to provide benefits for host communities as well refugee populations.¹⁶⁵ For example, internationally financed infrastructure built to promote refugee developments can favor the local community as can be seen by the 2009 Refugee Affected and Hosting Area (RAHA) Program in Pakistan.¹⁶⁶ RAHA created Basic Health Units for refugees that are also used by locals who were previously lacking easily accessible hospitals.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, refugees constitute new labor force for the host country; while there is an increased competition for jobs, displaced people can “give as well as receive,” paying taxes and benefiting the national economic growth, as happened in Sierra Leone thanks to a successful integration strategy.¹⁶⁸ Such successful strategies generally aim to promote effective solutions focused on legal, economic, and social dimensions thus providing well-balanced and comprehensive responses.¹⁶⁹

Legal and Policy Dimensions

The success of a ‘durable solution’ depends on the achievement of “long-term safety” of refugees and IDPs, their access to services, education, and employment, as well as their inclusion in national public life.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, it is

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Public Health (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014; Ahmed et al., *Epidemiology of Respiratory Viral Infections in Two Long-term Refugee Camps in Kenya, 2007-2010*, 2012.

¹⁵⁶ UNHCR, *UNHCR Public Health 2014 Annual Global Review*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Education Strategy (2012-2016)*, 2012; Doctors Without Borders, *Maternal Health*, 2015.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ WHO, *WHO Recommendations for Prevention and Treatment of Pre-eclampsia and Eclampsia*, 2011; Escobedo et al., *Ethical Issues with Informed Consent*, 2007.

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR, *Rwanda: Government Opens Refugee Camp for Burundian New Arrivals*, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Report 2014*, 2014.

¹⁶¹ WFP, *World Food Programme Forced to Cut Rations To Some 150.000 Refugees in Uganda*, 2015; Siegfried, *Alternatives to Refugee Camps: Can Policy Become Practice?* 2014.

¹⁶² Siegfried, *Alternatives to Refugee Camps: Can Policy Become Practice?* 2014; Massih, *NGOs Fear Donor Fatigue as Crisis Enters Fourth Year*, 2014.

¹⁶³ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*; Brookings Institution, *IDPs in Protracted Displacement: is Local Integration a Solution?* 2011.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR, *Project in Pakistan Ensures Health Services for Both Refugees and Locals*, 2013.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Fielden, *Local Integration: An Under-Reported Solution to Protracted Refugee Situations*, 2008; UNHCR, *The Benefits of Belonging*, 2011.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Brookings Institution, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010.

fundamental to promote an enabling legal framework for them to enjoy freedoms in the host state.¹⁷¹ While issuing specific decrees is the most immediate way a refugee emergency could be dealt with, amending existing legislation that limits refugee rights to be more inclusive is another option.¹⁷² At the same time, national policies and plans of action require only a simplified adoption procedure and their entry into force is often easier, needing “fewer formalities than laws” to be enacted.¹⁷³ However, their discussion must be transparent and informed by inclusiveness and accessibility, actively involving refugee and IDP representatives in policy design and implementation, as happened in the Kenyan Kakuma camp where representatives were elected by the refugee community to participate in decision-making.¹⁷⁴ In considering the input of displaced communities, particular attention must be paid to the underrepresented needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as women, and to the necessity to overcome eventual language barriers.¹⁷⁵ Specifically, the translation of policies and plans of action is fundamental to making them accessible and comprehensible by refugees, because in this way refugees can make conscious choices about their future.¹⁷⁶ It is also fundamental to promote the training of government officials by development actors to make them capable of performing new routines and procedures, understanding refugee and IDP specific needs.¹⁷⁷

On a more concrete level, the legal framework could be more enabling for displaced people, starting from non-discriminatory registration processes and transparent application criteria for refugee admission.¹⁷⁸ Refugees and IDPs freedom of movement is also often limited, thus restricting their ability to live in greater dignity, be integrated in the national labor market, as well as restricting their right to adequate housing, consisting of affordability and accessibility of shelter, availability of services and infrastructure, and protection against forced eviction.¹⁷⁹ Several measures have been taken towards addressing these issues. In fact, the international community discourages public and private house providers from carrying out both direct and indirect discriminatory rental and housing practices, stemming from “apparently neutral measures, which de facto favor dominant cultures,” and invites them to provide solutions that do not physically separate host communities and displaced people.¹⁸⁰ For example, in 2007, Georgia issued the State Strategy on IDPs, fostering local integration and refugee self-sufficiency, building on the 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, the Georgian Constitution, and the 2006 Law on IDPs.¹⁸¹ Going even further, the 2010 Durable Housing Solution provided accommodation for IDPs in 50 collective centers, where they were “offered self-privatization of their living unit for a symbolic price of 1 Georgian lari.”¹⁸² By 2013, despite delays due to lack of information, over 16,000 displaced families had witnessed improvements in tenure security, habitability, and relationships with locals.¹⁸³

Economic and Social Dimensions

To achieve self-reliance and higher standards of living, displaced people should have the possibility of gaining an income under the laws of the host state.¹⁸⁴ Since 2014, cash-based interventions have prevailed over “in-kind delivery of food and non-food items” for short-term relief and have been used in countries such as Kenya, Syria, and Ecuador.¹⁸⁵ For example, UNHCR’s Cash Assistance Program provides refugees with multi-purpose cash grants expendable for different aims according to what refugees deem important – such as “food and core relief items or

¹⁷¹ UNHCR, *The Benefits of Belonging*, 2011.

¹⁷² Brookings Institution, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ *Democracy and Refugee Participation in Decision-Making*, Kakuma News Reflector, 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Brookings Institution, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.; Brookings Institution, *IDPs in Protracted Displacement: is Local Integration a Solution?* 2011.

¹⁷⁷ Brookings Institution, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008; Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Right to Adequate Housing (A/65/261)*, 2010; OHCHR, *The Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit*, 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.; Brookings Institution, *IDPs in Protracted Displacement: is Local Integration a Solution?* 2011.

¹⁸¹ Brookings Institution, *Decree n.47 of the Government of Georgia on Approving of the State Strategy for Internally Displaced Persons – Persecuted*, 2007; Brookings Institution, *Law of Georgia on Internally Displaced Persons*, 2006.

¹⁸² Brookings Institution, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010; European Union, *Decree of the Georgian Government n.575*, 2010.

¹⁸³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Transfer of Public Buildings to Private Ownership*, 2015.

¹⁸⁴ UNHCR, *The Benefits of Belonging*, 2011.

¹⁸⁵ UNDP, *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015; UNHCR, *An Introduction to Cash-based Interventions in UNHCR Operations*, 2012.

services;” this program benefited up to 20,000 Jordanian families every month in 2014.¹⁸⁶ In the winter, seasonal cash assistance was also provided to Syrian refugees in need of heating solutions.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, in the medium-term, cash-for-work programs and public works can favor unskilled workers.¹⁸⁸ UNHCR promotes partnerships with “specialized financial institutions to provide cash or in-kind grants or loans, savings schemes, micro insurance,” or micro-financing.¹⁸⁹ It is also important to involve highly skilled refugees in camp building and maintenance activities, as well as in basic services delivery, helping them maintain their assets and develop new skills.¹⁹⁰ These measures must be accompanied by a long-term strategy on livelihoods, since the key to refugee integration is labor market integration achieved through non-discriminatory legislative measures and through easier access to land and jobs.¹⁹¹ The Government of Sierra Leone cooperated with UNHCR to promote durable solutions for Liberian refugees in the country, issuing a national strategy to facilitate their local integration, access to microcredit programs, and monthly meetings with other stakeholders to discuss policy implementation.¹⁹²

To improve displaced people’s chances of enhancing their skills and of being employed, education and vocational training play a key role. Therefore, the international community deems fundamental the promotion of “social and cultural frameworks to enable refugees to access education and social services as well as to participate in the social fabric of the country.”¹⁹³ UNHCR Education Strategy aims at granting education at every age, soon after the emergency, and continuously after the early phases of displacement, preventing the skills of refugees and IDPs from deteriorating after long years of displacement.¹⁹⁴ The Strategy identifies the goals to be achieved through partnerships and innovation by providing better primary education, as well as enhancing access to secondary schools and higher education courses.¹⁹⁵ Most importantly, action 2 of the UNHCR Education Strategy and the GPC Child Protection Workplan aims at making schools an environment that protects refugee children from “forced recruitment, [...] sexual and gender-based violence and child work,” making it easier for them to access appropriate support services, “such as health centers, the police and the judiciary.”¹⁹⁶ Like children, women constitute a vulnerable group with specific needs to be addressed: in fact, for local integration to be inclusive, women’s empowerment is fundamental.¹⁹⁷ It can be achieved through “equal participation of male and female representatives in camp and urban settings,” to balance the decision-making routines where the “male head of the household” usually prevails, making it difficult for women to even have access to resources and assistance.¹⁹⁸

Conclusion

UNHCR has increasingly considered refugee and IDP camps only as temporary measures, promoting their transformation into sustainable settlements and their integration in the host state socio-economic structure. Local integration is a multifaceted process, requiring the coordination of international and national actors, as well as both displaced and local communities. Such a process can be beneficial for both refugees, IDPs, and local communities only if the legal, economic, and social challenges are addressed. Much still needs to be done, especially towards the reduction of assistance gaps, causing food insecurity and health problems, and towards the provision of adequate housing for refugees. Donor fatigue, causing insufficient funding in the case of protracted displacement, is another main cause for concern both UNHCR and the international community when striving to provide for long-time displaced people. Moreover, in designing policies and integrating displaced people in the socio-economic fabric of a country, the needs of vulnerable groups, such as children and women, must be taken into consideration to enhance inclusiveness.

¹⁸⁶ UNHCR, *Innovation: Cash-based Interventions (EC/66/SC/CRP.13)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Innovation: Cash-based Interventions (EC/66/SC/CRP.13)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014; UNDP, *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015.

¹⁸⁹ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*, 2014.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ UNHCR, *The Benefits of Belonging*, 2011; UNHCR, *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugee*, 2013.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR, *UNHCR Education Strategy (2012-2016)*, 2012.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ UNHCR, *UNHCR Education Strategy (2012-2016)*, 2012; UNHCR, *Safe Schools and Learning Environment - How to Prevent and Respond to Violence in Refugee Schools: a Guide*, 2007; Global Protection Cluster, *Child Protection*, 2015.

¹⁹⁷ Brookings Institution, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*



Further Research

While preparing to discuss the topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How can international and national actors improve their contribution to the transformation of camps into sustainable settlements? How can continuous funding for UNHCR operations be guaranteed in cases of protracted displacement? What can be done to make refugee settlements more sustainable and integrated into the host country's economic and social fabric? IN what ways can displaced communities be involved in shaping accessible national strategies of their host country for their own integration into society? How can international and national actors address the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, such as children, youth, and women?

Annotated Bibliography

Brookings Institution. (2008). *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: a Manual for Law and Policymakers*. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2008/10/16-internal-displacement/10_internal_displacement_manual.pdf

The Brookings Institution published this manual based on three years of research in 2008. It is still useful today and, extremely applicable to refugee protection as well as to the protection of IDPs. The publication provides various examples of past actions and successful case studies that will help delegates understand what has already been done in this field, with a particular focus on the legal and policy dimensions. The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are the at the heart of this research. In fact, each principle informs operational guidelines for national and international actors and suggested best practices for assisting displaced people that are discussed in the manual.

Brookings Institution. (2010). *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2010/4/durable-solutions/04_durable_solutions.pdf

The report, published by the Brookings Institution, discusses the promotion of durable solutions for IDPs by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which coordinates UN and non-UN actors involved in humanitarian assistance. The document provides the definition of “durable solution” and outlines the main principles that inspire action in this field. The framework follows a rights-based process and encourages the involvement of IDPs in framing strategies. It also identifies key areas to address, such as good standards of living, non-discriminatory access to livelihoods, employment and justice, possibility to participate in the public life of the country. The IASC Framework will be a useful resource for delegates to provide a better understanding of the commitment of the international community on the topic, with a special focus on the fundamental rights-based approach that is encouraged.

United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/3RP-Report-Overview.pdf>

The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) was developed to provide an answer to the current Syrian refugee crisis. It coordinates the national strategies of the different national governments involved in the region: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. The Overview contains information and data about the 2014 achievements, identifying the main strategic priorities for the years 2015-2016, among them, livelihoods, shelters, food security, and education. This plan focuses on involving both refugee and host communities in two-way communication, which can be beneficial for both parties and facilitate successful programs. The document will help delegates gain a deeper understanding of a recent, comprehensive refugee protection strategy.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2011). *The Benefits of Belonging* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4e3276c26.html>

This UNHCR report highlights the advantages that originate from local integration, which can be beneficial for host communities as well as for refugees. The first section of the publication provides relevant case studies (Tanzania, Belarus, and Sierra Leone) on local integration in different areas of the world, with diverse backgrounds. In doing so, it shows the path followed by locals and refugees towards integration, identifying the main socio-economic consequences of the process. The second section focuses on the “bigger picture,” explaining the broader regional strategies in this field. Through concrete examples, the report will help delegates understand how host communities can positively react to integration processes.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2012). *Education Strategy (2012-2016)*. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html>

This is the UNHCR Education Strategy for the years 2012-2016. It includes important guidelines for both international and national stakeholders that promote education for refugees and displaced people. UNHCR identifies six main actions to be undertaken including, the promotion of

education at every age, with special focus on children and young people, and the provision of higher education courses. Most importantly, according to UNHCR, education and the protection of young boys and girls are strongly linked. The Strategy provides delegates with detailed information on UNHCR strategic approaches to education as well related topics such as the innovative use of technology and the promotion of partnerships.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013). *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugees* [Report]. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5273a9e89.html>

The Policy Development and Evaluation Service of UNHCR, which has the task of examining policies and practices in order to make its work more efficient, issued this evaluation report. Providing data for specific countries, the report aims to give an overview of the current situation of labor market integration of refugees, specifying what kind of jobs are available to resettled refugees and what the main problems are for the attainment of this kind of integration. The document also points out “ten promising practices” in this field, which are studied in relation to resettled refugees, but that could be applied to a broader spectrum of refugee situations; for instance, tailored plans of action, public-private partnership, microenterprises, language courses and training.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Livelihoods (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf>

The document, issued by UNHCR, contains the UNHCR strategy guidelines for the years 2014-2018 regarding livelihoods. First, it outlines the guiding principles of the strategy, such as protection, equity and the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach. Second, the document focuses on the current situation of refugees and IDPs. Third, the strategic objectives are clearly pointed out: the main ones promote the right to work and the right to development, as well as facilitate economic self-reliance. The last section of the document is devoted to the different strategic approaches. The “Global Strategy for Livelihoods” will be a useful source for delegates to help give an insight into the goals of UNHCR and possible approaches in attaining them.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Public Health (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*. Retrieved 5 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f12d26.html>

The Global Strategy for Public Health, contains the UNHCR strategic guidelines for the years 2014-2018 with regard to public health; it is an extremely useful source to examine the objectives of UNHCR in this field and the possible actions to achieve them. The first section is similar to that of the other Global Strategies, listing the guiding principles of protection, equity and the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach, as well as UNHCR strategic approaches. Of particular importance, however, are the other section, which are devoted to an overview of the Public Health Strategy, HIV and Reproductive Health, Food Security, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter (A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018)*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f13aa9.pdf>

After explaining upon the main guiding principles of the UNHCR strategy for settlement and shelter, the document provides a context analysis of the current situation. It then focuses on the two primary objectives and the connected actions to be undertaken. The strategy finally outlines the strategic approaches useful to ensure secure settlements, where refugees can live in dignity and enjoy development. This will be a very useful source for delegates and a good starting point to examine in-depth what the main assistance gaps are towards, and how to transform camps into, sustainable settlements.

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The UNHCR policy on alternatives to camps shows the deficiencies of a policy based only on refugee camps and the importance of phasing them out. It also focuses on what the main goals of UNHCR are and how to implement them. For example, it pays attention to the importance of helping refugees build sustainable livelihoods, of shaping service delivery with the involvement of refugees and local authorities, and of promoting an enabling legal framework. Finally, the

document provides useful definitions with relating topic. The document is the most useful source to gain a deeper and overall understanding of the latest UNHCR strategy in this field.

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II. Strengthening the Capacity of Refugee Host Countries

Introduction

The year 2014 saw the highest rate of forced displacement on record, with 59.9 million individuals displaced worldwide.¹⁹⁹ By late 2015, the number of refugees in the world has already reached 60 million.²⁰⁰ The current crises in the Middle East, mainly in the Syrian region, have continued to induce migration flows from the Syrian Arab Republic across the Mediterranean Sea.²⁰¹ Since January of 2015, 750,000 people have arrived in Europe from the Middle East and Africa, escaping conflict and economic instability.²⁰² According to António Guterres, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015 has seen the largest amount of “simultaneous large-scale humanitarian crises” in the past 10 years, with the number of daily displacements increasing by four times since last year.²⁰³ The crises in the Middle East have caused the displacement of nearly 20 million people (including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Afghanistan).²⁰⁴ In Africa, the combined crises in Mali, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Somalia have resulted in over 6 million refugees and displaced persons.²⁰⁵ Conversely, 2014 saw the lowest number of repatriated refugees in 30 years, and funding for humanitarian organizations is insufficient to cover their needs.²⁰⁶

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) mandate is to protect and assist refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons (IDPs); and, in particular, to find durable solutions for their migration through repatriation, resettlement, or local integration.²⁰⁷ The issue of building and strengthening the capacities of host countries is thus a core activity to UNHCR’s mandate, and the organization is engaged in a wide variety of activities to ensure the protection and well-being of the refugees in host countries.²⁰⁸ Building capacity is connected to the improvement of national refugee legislation, which includes administrative and operational guidelines; and the development of dynamic national refugee status determination procedures.²⁰⁹ However, UNHCR cannot accomplish this goal alone; cooperation is paramount to assisting a country in improving its hosting capacity.²¹⁰ Therefore, UNHCR has established a wide variety of partnerships and programs to include governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and specialized agencies to carry out its mandate more efficiently, especially for the resettlement of refugees.²¹¹ Recognizing that building capacity is a core issue for the UN as a whole, in 1997 the General Assembly (GA) urged Member States to support capacity building initiatives as a fundamental approach to promote sustainable development.²¹² The activities the GA called for directly stress the need for strong cooperation between host governments and UNHCR, involving national legal and juridical institutions.²¹³

It is general, it is recognized that hosting refugees has strong impacts on a country’s economy, society, and environment, whether refugees are sheltered in camps or are self-reliant.²¹⁴ Host governments must adapt their

¹⁹⁹ UNHCR, *World at War: UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014*, 2014, p. 2.

²⁰⁰ UNHCR, *Third Committee of the General Assembly, 70th Session (New York, November 3) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres' statement on questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons*, 2015.

²⁰¹ UNHCR, *World at War: UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014*, 2014.

²⁰² UNHCR, *Third Committee of the General Assembly, 70th Session (New York, November 3) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres' statement on questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons*, 2015.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ UNHCR, *Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees and his Office*, 2013; UNHCR, *Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR*, 2014.

²⁰⁸ UNHCR, *Capacity Building*, 2015.

²⁰⁹ UNHCR, *Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status*, 2011; UNHCR, *Promoting Refugee Protection*, 2015.

²¹⁰ UNHCR, *Capacity Building*, 2015.

²¹¹ UNHCR, *Partnership in Protection*, 2015.

²¹² UN General Assembly, *Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/52/103)*, 1998.

²¹³ UN General Assembly, *Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/54/146)*, 2000.

²¹⁴ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 1.

national legislation, economics, and other policies, to be able to accept and accommodate refugees.²¹⁵ This begins with the regulation of border controls, which becomes difficult when forced to address the issues of mixed migration.²¹⁶ Irregular migrants, who lack the required documentation to enter and to stay in their country of arrival, usually travel alongside refugees, producing the phenomenon, “mixed migration”.²¹⁷ People who can claim and obtain the recognition of their refugee status, however, can have access to refugee camps unlike those classified as migrants.²¹⁸ Further, integrating large groups of refugees abruptly into a society cause many social and political tensions.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, UNHCR encourages countries to find alternative durable solutions to the settlement of both migrants and refugees through the development of policies and programs that help refugees become self-reliant and which integrate them into the local society of their host country.²²⁰ Integrating refugees means providing them with legal and material instruments to develop a normal and decent life, where they can become self-reliant and live harmoniously in their new home.²²¹ It also means assisting both the host society and the refugees in adapting to new cultures.²²² Ultimately, the international community must face the current situation together to understand and meet these challenges; UNHCR is playing a key role in facilitating this cooperation and leading the way for building the world’s capacity in this regard.

International and Regional Framework

The legal framework for UNHCR’s engagement in the protection of refugees finds its basis in Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), “which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.”²²³ Article 14 of the UDHR is also the legal background for the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), and the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967), where a refugee is defined as someone who is forced to leave their country because of the fear of being persecuted for reasons such as racial, religious, or ethnical discrimination.²²⁴ The 1951 Convention sets the legal framework for creating conditions that allow refugees to achieve self-reliance in countries of asylum.²²⁵ UNHCR looks to make it possible for individuals to have the right to seek asylum and find safe shelter in states other than the one of their nationality.²²⁶ As the GA outlines in resolution 54/146 of 1999 regarding capacity building: states must fulfill their responsibility to assist refugees through an effective mobilization of resources to address their needs.²²⁷

In 2014, UNHCR developed the *2014-2018 Global Strategy for Livelihoods* to strengthen its capacity to facilitate refugees’ self-reliance.²²⁸ This is done through the implementation of approaches based on the improvement of their access to different social fields, especially the labor markets, which may contribute to a sustainable economic development of host countries.²²⁹ Livelihoods are activities that allow refugees to secure necessities, in terms of food, clothing, and housing; they are usually gained through self-production such as agricultural food production or employment in the local economy with stable jobs, which would give them the means to purchase the goods and services they need.²³⁰ The efficient development of livelihood strategies can have a positive impact on the capacity of host countries; by making refugees self-reliant, the host government does not have to allocate a portion of its public budget specifically to refugees’ needs.²³¹ The *Global Strategy for Livelihoods* is linked to the achievement of the *Global Strategic Priorities* (GSPs) set by UNHCR.²³² The *Global Strategic Priorities* represent several areas in which UNHCR is trying to strengthen protection, improve the life quality, and seek permanent solutions for the

²¹⁵ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 1.

²¹⁶ UNHCR, *Asylum and Migration*, 2015.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013.

²¹⁹ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 12.

²²⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013, p. 4.

²²¹ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²²² The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 12.

²²³ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

²²⁴ *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

²²⁵ UNHCR, *UNHCR’s Mission*, 2015.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/54/146)*, 2000.

²²⁸ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 12.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 9.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

integration of refugees in host countries.²³³ One of the goals set through the GSPs is to obtain durable solutions through comprehensive approaches to achieve sustainable reintegration and local settlement in host countries.²³⁴ The livelihood support and the development of opportunities for quality education are fundamental factors for the success of the UNHCR's programs.²³⁵

UNHCR also works towards the achievement of development goals like the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through the eradication of poverty and hunger among the refugee populations.²³⁶ The topic of strengthening the capacity of host countries is intrinsically connected to Goal 11 of the post-2015 development agenda, which aims at "making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."²³⁷ Finally, UNHCR's regular integration activities for refugees align with Goal 8, by contributing to creating conditions for sustainable, inclusive, and sustained economic growth through decent work for all.²³⁸

Role of the International System

Cooperation among states, and between states and other actors is a core principle regarding the issue of capacity building, and one which UNHCR relies upon in order to fulfill its mandate.²³⁹ In fact, an effective solution to the issue of mixed migration inevitably depends upon full cooperation among all the actors involved: national governments, regional organizations such as the European Union, and international organizations such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as local and international NGOs, such as Save The Children.²⁴⁰

One fundamental partner working with refugees globally is the the International Organization for Migration (IOM).²⁴¹ Working with the IOM, the *Ten Point Plan in Action*, was developed in 2011 with the intent of facilitating and improving the reception and sorting of refugees and asylum seekers by host governments.²⁴² The Plan first was aimed at European countries, but due to migratory developments in the years following its adoption, new regions have since been involved in the project.²⁴³ The most important step of the Plan includes strengthening the reception and detention monitoring procedures of host countries.²⁴⁴ It is based on the idea that appropriate reception arrangements are necessary to meet the needs of refugees, and that refugees should be provided with temporary documentation, which is a fundamental requisite to have access to refugee camps, or to conduct a normal and integrated life in the hosting community.²⁴⁵

Regionally, Europe is currently experiencing one of the greatest influxes of refugees in its history. Within the policy framework of the European Union (EU), the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) developed a strategic plan to be enacted from 2014-2016.²⁴⁶ This plan outlines several core activities, most of which are aimed at national authorities, in order to assist national governments in facing the refugee crises affecting Europe.²⁴⁷ These activities are intended to support refugees through legal protection and simplify their integration into local communities.²⁴⁸ The plan also includes cooperation with the host countries' civil society.²⁴⁹ For example, in Germany, many charitable agencies are providing refugees with basic supplies, such as food and clothing.²⁵⁰ In the city of Hamburg, specifically, unutilized public buildings and empty supermarkets are being used as shelters for

²³³ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities. 2014-2015*, 2014, p. 1.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²³⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²³⁹ UNHCR, *Capacity Building*, 2015.

²⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 10

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁴² Ibid. p. 10.

²⁴³ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 7.

²⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A Ten Point Plan of Action*, 2007, p. 6.

²⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 12.

²⁴⁶ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, *Strategic Plan 2014-2016*, 2014, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ *Hamburg's Solution to Migrant Housing Crisis*, BBC News, 2015.

refugees.²⁵¹ Moreover, the government has mandated the construction of a large amount of containers, which will be utilized as shelters for refugees.²⁵² Nevertheless, the expectations of ECRE have not been met by every European state; countries like Hungary have closed their borders to refugees, posing challenges for their proper reception of refugees within the EU.²⁵³

Economic and Environmental Impacts on Host Countries

The presence of refugees in a host country has strong consequences on its macro-economy.²⁵⁴ The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have conducted various studies regarding the influence of refugees on the social and economic infrastructure of neighboring countries.²⁵⁵ From these studies, it emerged that the presence of massive refugee populations provokes an increase of the countries' public expenses, mostly due to the designation of emergency funds.²⁵⁶ Typically, refugee populations find shelter in remote or isolated border areas, which lack adequate infrastructures or are characterized by low levels of economic activity.²⁵⁷ This generates costs linked with building or improving infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, streets, and, sometimes, housings.²⁵⁸ Since most of the refugee populations are likely to remain in their host countries for a substantial amount of time, the state has to create a wide range of public policies based on long-term planning, with attention to economic development needs, including plans for job creation.²⁵⁹ In most of the cases, the refugee situation requires an implementation of public policies regarding the economic sector, especially the labor market.²⁶⁰ For example in Canada, the government established dedicated facilities for companies that hire refugees.²⁶¹

The presence of refugee populations can also affect the local economy of a host country positively.²⁶² Refugees can, in fact, import knowledge and skills from which the state can benefit both in the public and in the private sectors.²⁶³ An increased population causes an increment of the prices of primary agricultural goods; as a result, local farmers and merchants positively benefit from the increased demand of their agricultural goods in local markets.²⁶⁴ At the same time, this can have negative consequences for the local population as well as for refugees themselves, since they can only buy primary goods at a raised price.²⁶⁵

The settlement of refugees often occurs in areas where the environment can be easily deteriorated.²⁶⁶ Refugee camps are usually erected in non-urbanized zones, close to forests or in arid regions where it is hard to find water, wood, or other raw materials.²⁶⁷ The construction or maintenance of these camps often causes environmental deterioration.²⁶⁸ Moreover, the presence of refugee camps causes a reduction of usually available resources and materials, again causing a rise in prices.²⁶⁹ Commonly, host governments set policies for the safeguard of the national borders and refugees' access points, where many camps often become established; in many cases, they recruit local staff members from the public or the private sector for this purpose.²⁷⁰

²⁵¹ *Hamburg's Solution to Migrant Housing Crisis*, BBC News, 2015.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Migrant crisis: Hungary's closed border leaves many stranded*, BBC News, 2015.

²⁵⁴ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 1.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵⁶ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 7.

²⁵⁷ UNHCR, *The Role of Host Countries, The Cost and Impact of Hosting Refugees*, 2011, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ UNHCR, *The Role of Host Countries, The Cost and Impact of Hosting Refugees*, 2011, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

²⁶¹ Canada, *Government-Assisted Refugee Program*, 2015.

²⁶² The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 8.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁶⁶ Shepherd, *The Impact of Refugees on Environment and Appropriate Responses*, 1995.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ UNHCR, *The Role of Host Countries, The Cost and Impact of Hosting Refugees*, 2011, pp. 2-3.

All these factors reduce the capacity of refugee host countries, limiting their possibility to open the borders to additional groups of asylum seekers.²⁷¹ In many cases, aid from external agencies is required to find the funds necessary to adapt the country's territory, legislation, and economy to the needs of the refugee and the local populations.²⁷² UNHCR often assists host countries by providing funds necessary for the adjustments to integrate refugee populations.²⁷³ For example, in 1989, UNHCR helped Malawi with a program that included the substantial expansion of infrastructures, such as "hospitals, clinics, road networks, and water supply, including reforestation plans to alleviate the environmental degradation of wood fuels."²⁷⁴ Along the same lines, to face the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, UNHCR is directly providing food stamps, medical aid, shelter, and clothing to Syrians sheltered both in refugee camps and in urban centers.²⁷⁵ UNHCR is also supporting refugees through programs that enable them to become self-reliant in their new environment, assisting children to attend school, and training parents so that they can acquire job skills.²⁷⁶

Social Impact on Host Countries

Integration into their host countries is the most delicate issue for refugees, mostly because of the lack of adequate laws regulating this integration.²⁷⁷ In some cases, when refugees and the local population have the same cultural and linguistic background, the integration process is easier.²⁷⁸ For example, over 400,000 refugees were accommodated in local people's houses in the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1990.²⁷⁹ However, when the host population and refugees have different backgrounds, there are often failures in communication caused by differences in language and culture.²⁸⁰ Therefore, the coexistence of refugees and the host population may cause social conflicts due to xenophobia or practical misunderstandings and prejudices.²⁸¹ Refugees are often blamed for security problems, crime rates, and other social problems such as prostitution and alcoholism.²⁸² Moreover, the implementation of refugees' rights to education, literacy, vocational training, sanitation, and a basic livelihood may contribute to tensions with the local population, as locals sometimes live under conditions where these rights are not realized.²⁸³

Xenophobic discrimination also comes from governments.²⁸⁴ For instance, Hungary built a fence at the border with Serbia to keep refugees outside the country.²⁸⁵ In the case of Southern Africa, a high rate of xenophobic discrimination against the sub-Saharan refugee population was registered by the end of 2014.²⁸⁶ Southern African countries currently hosts 500,000 refugees from various conflict areas in the region, such as Angola, Botswana, Comoros, and Madagascar.²⁸⁷ The different ethnicities of the national civil population and the refugee population have caused increasing tensions between the groups, and have threatened the integration of refugees into society.²⁸⁸ To address this issue, the UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Africa started a cooperation with the national government; this cooperation allowed the creation of activities with the aim of reducing xenophobic discriminations and improving refugees' integration process.²⁸⁹

²⁷¹ UNHCR, *The Role of Host Countries, The Cost and Impact of Hosting Refugees*, 2011.

²⁷² Shepherd, *The Impact of Refugees on Environment and Appropriate Responses*, 1995.

²⁷³ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 7.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷⁵ UNHCR, *Syria Crisis Appeal*, 2015.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 10.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁸¹ Tendayi Achiume, *Beyond Prejudice: Structural Xenophobic Discrimination against Refugees*, 2014, p. 3.

²⁸² The World Bank, *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2011, p. 11.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁸⁴ *Hungary's Xenophobia, Europe's Crisis*, Bloomberg View, 2015.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ UNHCR, *Protection from Xenophobia: An evaluation of UNHCR's Regional Office for Southern Africa's Xenophobia Related Problems*, 2015.

²⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Southern Africa*, 2015.

²⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Protection from Xenophobia: An evaluation of UNHCR's Regional Office for Southern Africa's Xenophobia Related Problems*, 2015.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Mixed Migration and Access to Camps

Border controls are a very important part of the process of refugees' settlement in a host country; making the control procedures more efficient can strengthen the capacity of host countries to receive refugees and to integrate them.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, this is not an easy issue to address; in many cases, states do not have enough funds to develop a more efficient border control procedure, mostly because the number of agents located at the border cannot manage the migration flows.²⁹¹ Moreover, it is difficult for agents to recognize refugees, because they only represent a small part of the the people entering the country.²⁹² At present, UNHCR is working closely with European states, such as Germany, to assure the respect of certain conditions in the acceptance procedures at the national borders.²⁹³ UNHCR's strategy to address the needs of refugees currently reaching Europe includes the monitoring of admission practices.²⁹⁴ For instance, the acceptance process in Germany is governed by the Asylum Procedure Act, which allows refugees to obtain a residence permit in a brief amount of time.²⁹⁵

The treatment of refugees and irregular migrants in host countries, beginning with their access at the national borders, is determined by legal regulations of the host country, which varies depending on the country.²⁹⁶ A significant problem arises when migrants and refugees cross borders without the requisite documentation.²⁹⁷ Those without the documentation often attempt to avoid the controls at the border by using non-authorized crossing areas due to fears of being denied entry and mistreatment.²⁹⁸ In most cases, refugees do not possess the required documentation and this usually leads to their detention as illegal migrants, especially when passing through unauthorized entry points.²⁹⁹ Yet, it is in the interest of refugees to pass through border control so as to be able to access the rights that can be recognized only by obtaining refugee status.³⁰⁰

For these reasons, UNHCR has stressed the need for control measures to be fair and equal, not to be applied in a discriminatory manner, and to prevent refugees from being deported to their countries of origin, if doing so might put their lives at risk.³⁰¹ Given that recognizing the persons of concern can be difficult because of mixed migration, UNCHR supports governments on this issue.³⁰² In cooperation with IOM through the *Ten Point Plan in Action*, UNHCR is helping host countries to implement more efficient border control procedures, making the acceptance of refugees easier and their integration into local communities faster.³⁰³ A key factor is the release of temporary documentation to refugees who do not have it while crossing the states' borders.³⁰⁴

Alternatives to Camps and Urban Refugee Policy

Refugee camps remain a fundamental feature in the context of refugees' settlement in host countries.³⁰⁵ Living in camps affects refugees with a variety of restrictions, due to a limitation of their rights and freedom.³⁰⁶ Moreover, the settlement of refugees in camps reduces their self-reliance, increasing their dependence on the host governments, and in turn limits the capacity of these countries to host a wider number of refugees.³⁰⁷ When becoming self-reliant, refugees can contribute to the communities in which they live, lightening the burden of the government.³⁰⁸ To this effect, UNHCR is committed to providing valid alternatives to refugees living in camps, in order to reduce the cost

²⁹⁰ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A Ten Point Plan of Action*, 2007, p. 3.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁹² UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 9.

²⁹³ UNHCR, *Germany*, 2015.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Germany, *Asylum Procedure Act (AsylVfG)*, 2011.

²⁹⁶ UNHCR, *Asylum and Migration*, 2015.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A Ten Point Plan of Action*, 2007, p. 4.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁰¹ UNHCR, *Asylum and Migration*, 2015.

³⁰² UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A Ten Point Plan of Action*, 2007, p. 3.

³⁰³ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 10.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

burden on the host government.³⁰⁹ The most common alternative to refugee camps is to shelter in urban areas.³¹⁰ Today, more than 50% of the global population lives in urban areas.³¹¹ However, it is recognized that a variety of difficulties can arise when refugees find shelter in these areas.³¹² Firstly, urban refugees usually live in densely-populated and poorly-serviced environments.³¹³ Secondly, this situation can cause a competition between communities over limited resources such as water, electricity, and land.³¹⁴ Finally, the integration of refugees in the host country becomes hard when they are sheltered in urban areas because of their restricted access to the work sector; most of the refugees are forced to accept unregulated and underpaid jobs with limited protection.³¹⁵

Durable solutions are harder to attain in these situations; UNHCR plays an essential role concerning the legal and political aspects of local integration.³¹⁶ In 2009, UNHCR introduced the *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solution in Urban Areas*.³¹⁷ In order to develop alternative strategies, UNHCR is following several lines of action: the first directly involves refugees, who are consulted in order to better meet their needs and to find effective solutions.³¹⁸ UNHCR's aim is to also work closely with national governments to adapt national legislation and accommodate the protection of refugees in said legislation.³¹⁹ By finding alternatives to camps, UNHCR allows national governments to find sustainable and cost-effective solutions, and harness the potential of refugees rather than stifle their integration.³²⁰ Although governments may have to face an initial investment to develop policies that facilitate refugees' self-reliance, it has been shown to reduce subsequent costs in the long-term.³²¹

Conclusion

The issue of strengthening the capacity of host countries encompasses a wide range of challenges. As previously outlined, the integration of refugees in a host country can have significant impacts on the country's economy, society, and legislation. Therefore, the work of UNHCR to address this issue must have a multi-faceted approach, and must involve the cooperation of all stakeholders, especially the national authorities of host countries as well as civil society to help augment governments limited capacity and slow pace of reform. The integration of refugees into this process is also paramount; it is crucial that they develop a degree of self-reliance and are empowered to feel ownership of their integration, thus avoiding large refugee populations become an unsustainable burden to host countries. An effective legal regulation of their control and settlement is a foundation for this process. Through the UN system, and especially the UNHCR there is the opportunity to positively address the global influx of refugees, address issues of mixed migration more effectively, and ensure that the host countries have the means and resources to sustainably and simultaneously care for and sustain both their local populations and those of the arriving refugees.

Further Research

Delegates should begin their research by understanding the policies of their country regarding the acceptance of migrants, especially refugees. In what areas can the international community assist refugee host countries? What policies are needed within the UN system to improve UNHCR's ability to assist host countries, especially in the context of the SDGs? Further, delegates should assess the cooperation of UNHCR with governments and other organizations and agencies. Cooperation is a key factor for building capacity. What existing initiatives, policies, and programs can be expanded to better support partnerships? How can civil society be integrated with national approaches in a more formal way? Most of UNHCR's initiatives are specifically designed to address different regional situations, are region-specific approaches best or are there more international approaches that could better address the global refugee crisis? How should UNHCR assess its mandate, its financial situation, and current programs to ensure best practice are being followed and any inefficiencies are addressed?

³⁰⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013, p. 4.

³¹⁰ UN DESA, *Population Facts No. 2013/2: The number of international worldwide reaches 232 million*, 2013.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*, 2009, p. 2.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013, p. 6.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

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Shepherd, G. (1995). *The Impact of Refugees on Environment and Appropriate Responses*. Humanitarian Practice Network. Retrieved 2 October 2015 from: <http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-04/the-impact-of-refugees-on-the-environment-and-appropriate-responses>

This text offers a concise overview of the complex relation between refugee populations and the environment, an issue also related to the implementation of the new SDGs. The impact that refugees have on host countries' environment can be considerable, mostly because of deforestation and deterioration of water, food, and raw material caused by the construction of big refugee camps. The deterioration of already scarce resources can occur even if refugees have the chance to become self-reliant in the hosting society. Therefore, every policy enacted by the host government must take in consideration the consequences it can have on the local environment.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2007). *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A 10-Point Plan of Action*. Retrieved 9 October 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4742a30b4.pdf>

The 10-Point Plan of Action is a project launched by UNHCR with the aim of assisting European countries to face refugee crises. Although it was first enacted several years ago, it has been reinterpreted and developed to face current necessities, and it has been made available to a wider range of countries in different regions. The plan includes various measures that can help boost the capacity of refugee host countries, and it provides delegates with an example of how UNHCR and refugee host countries can cooperate to achieve a common goal.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2009). *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*. Retrieved 19 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ab356ab6.pdf>

The largest amount of global refugees are not sheltered in refugee camps, but in urban areas. The integration of refugees in cities is harder than it is in a refugee camp because of the conflicts that arise relating to the access to scarce resources such as food, water, and housing. In addition, refugees' access to the labor market can become more difficult because of a higher competition. This document explains the issues related to the presence of refugees in urban areas, and provides several solutions to reduce conflicts and improve the living conditions of those refugees.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013). *Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees and his Office*. Retrieved 9 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/526a22cb6.html>

The first step delegates should take to understand how to address the topic, is studying the mandate of UNHCR. This document is a summary that contains all of the necessary information, with useful connections to the work of the General Assembly. By understanding the mandate of UNHCR, delegates will be able to focus their work on practical and effective solutions to address the issue of strengthening the capacity of refugee host countries.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013). *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. Retrieved 6 October 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.pdf>

This UNHCR document is very useful for addressing the issue of capacity building in refugee host countries. Refugee camps are a common reality in the context of refugee settlement; at the same time, it is the most expensive option for hosting governments. UNHCR, in collaboration with several partners, such as IOM and Save the Children, has been working to provide effective alternatives to camps, based on the concept of self-reliance. This document focuses on the substantive work of UNHCR to help refugees and, especially, governments to find durable and sustainable solutions to the integration of refugees into the national society. In this document, delegates will find very practical approaches to the topic, and by reading it they will better understand what realistic solutions UNHCR's mandate offers.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategic Priorities* [Report]. UNHCR Global Appeal 2014-2015. Retrieved 13 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/528a0a10b.html>

This document contains the definition of the Global Strategic Priorities, a series of operations enacted by UNHCR to improve the protection and integration of refugees in their host countries. Delegates can find important ideas regarding the organizational aspects of addressing the issues

that arise from hosting refugees. Moreover, this will be a useful example of the commitment of UNHCR and the realization of its mandate in the context of the most current topical issues.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*. Retrieved 18 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf>

This document contains an accurate analysis of the Global Strategy for Livelihoods enacted by UNHCR. This program is one of the most important projects set with the aim of assisting refugees and, especially, their host countries. The project involves a wide range of solutions to the issue of refugees' settlement in host countries. Delegates can therefore use it to have a solid example of how the topic is addressed in different areas (protection, sustainability, community empowerment etc.), and as a guide to understand the means through which UNHCR operates to help host countries improve their capacity.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Asylum and Migration* [Website]. Retrieved 8 October 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a1d406060.html>

The phenomenon of mixed migration can cause serious difficulties in the process of acceptance of refugees in a host country. As this source outlines, an effective policy toward the integration of refugees begins with dynamic border controls. For this reason, UNHCR is deeply committed to setting standards for host countries' acceptance policies and procedures. By reading this document, delegates will understand the issue of mixed migration and see how UNHCR cooperates with host countries.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Executive Committee, Fifty-first Meeting. (2011). *The Role of Host Countries, The Cost and Impact of Hosting Refugees* [Official Record]. Retrieved 7 October 2015 from: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/520b3fa24.pdf>

Studying the impact that refugee populations have on their country of residence allows delegates to understand the challenges UNHCR has to address in order to improve the capacity of host countries. This source presents the issue from the point of view of UNHCR, providing several solutions already enacted by several host and transit countries. Therefore, the report will provide delegates with information regarding the specific areas they have to focus on when addressing the issue. They will also benefit from practical examples of effective solutions.

The World Bank. (2011). *The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*. Retrieved 21 August 2015 from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWDR2011/Resources/6406082-1283882418764/WDR_Background_Paper_Refugees.pdf

To fully understand the topic of strengthening the capacity of refugee host countries, it is crucial to analyze the impact that big masses of refugees can have on a host country. The process of integration also has strong consequences on many aspects of national assets. This report by the World Bank analyzes the different aspects of the integration progress, including economic, social, and environmental impacts. Understanding these aspects of the topic will give delegates the basis upon which they can develop efficient strategies to address the issue.

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III. Addressing Temporary Displacements Due to Outbreaks and Epidemics

Introduction

There is a well-documented correlation between displaced populations and an increase in disease outbreaks.³²² Due to the lack of infrastructure and breakdown in the delivery of services, highly contagious diseases spread quickly and efficiently through at-risk populations.³²³ As a result of recent events, there has been a marked increase of populations displaced from the outbreak of disease, primarily in West Africa secondary to the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak.³²⁴ While these displacements are not as protracted as other displacement situations, there is a significant risk of further disease and potential conflict because of the breakdown of civil society and provision of basic services when disease epidemics and outbreaks occur.³²⁵

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) defines a disaster as “a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community’s or society’s ability to cope using its own resources.”³²⁶ Disasters are classified as natural, technological, and more recently biological.³²⁷ Biological disasters include large-scale epidemics, which are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the occurrence in a community or region of cases of an illness, specific health-related behavior, or other health-related events clearly in excess of normal expectancy. The community or region and the period in which the cases occur are specified precisely.”³²⁸ An outbreak is defined as the “...epidemic limited to localized increase in the incidence of a disease, e.g., in a village, town, or closed institution”.³²⁹ Epidemics often are further exacerbated by the breakdown of health services, resulting in intensified transmission.³³⁰

Previous large-scale displacement of people have resulted in epidemics and outbreaks, such as the 1994 Great Lake Refugee Crisis during which 50,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees died as a result of a cholera epidemic in multiple camps.³³¹ Diseases such as cholera and measles spread at a much higher rate in a displaced population due to the density of crowding, lack of sanitation facilities, and breakdown of healthcare services.³³² However, the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak is the first time there has been documented displacement due to disease on a large scale.³³³ While the idea of displacement from disease is a novel idea, it poses significant issues to the humanitarian responders and creates a challenging environment to deliver services.³³⁴ This results from the difficulty of adequately tracking and predicting further movement, as well as determining the motivations behind displacement patterns.³³⁵ Further examination of the legal framework surrounding displaced populations, the role of early warning systems, the need to strengthen existing technological resources, and the impact of the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak will highlight the challenges faced due temporary displacements due to epidemics and outbreaks.

International and Regional Framework

The legal background for addressing temporary displacements due to outbreaks and epidemics consists of a combination of existing conventions and frameworks addressing two distinct areas: rights and refugee and IDP protection, and disaster preparedness and response.

³²² Watson, et al., *Epidemics after Natural Disasters*, 2007.

³²³ WHO, *Malaria Control in Complex Emergencies*, 2005; Leaning, *Natural Disasters, Armed Conflict, and Public Health*, 2013.

³²⁴ Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014.

³²⁵ Watson et al., *Epidemics after Natural Disasters*, 2007.

³²⁶ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *What is a disaster?*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ WHO, *Definitions: Emergencies*, 2015.

³²⁹ Last, *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*, 2014, p. 206.

³³⁰ Watson, et al., *Epidemics after Natural Disasters*, 2007.

³³¹ Waterman, *Journey after Darkness, A Study of Goma, Zaire in 1994: Cholera and Clean Water*, 2014.

³³² Leaning, *Natural Disasters, Armed Conflict, and Public Health*, 2013.

³³³ Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

The *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) and the associated *1967 Protocol* are the basic United Nations (UN) documents that outline what defines a refugee and address refugee protection and the provision of rights.³³⁶ The Convention defines a refugee as “a person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”³³⁷ This Convention evolved from previous International Refugee Organization documents and provided the basis of refugee rights in the second half of the 20th century.³³⁸ Refugee rights guaranteed by the Convention and its *1967 Protocol* include the right to not be expelled (Article 32), the right to work (Articles 17 to 19), the right to housing (Article 21), and the right to education (Article 22).³³⁹

These documents have since been built upon, particularly as the global landscape evolves and places refugees in vulnerable and unforeseen situations. The 1969 Organization of African Unity *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* further expands upon the 1951 Convention, and broadens the definition of refugee to include: “every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.”³⁴⁰ This expanded definition provides further inclusion and can be utilized for populations temporarily displaced by disease or outbreak.³⁴¹

Until recently, there have been few documents that explicitly address IDPs, particularly on a regional level.³⁴² The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (2004) provides a comprehensive overview of definitions pertaining to IDPs as well as the rights afforded to IDPs.³⁴³ The *Guiding Principles* outline rights, such as the expectation of security (Principle 12), the protection against arbitrary displacement (Principle 6), and the freedom of movement (Principle 14).³⁴⁴ These principles were further built upon with the *Kampala Convention* (2009) issued by the African Union (AU), which addresses the IDP issue within Africa.³⁴⁵ It outlines the areas in which the AU can directly intervene in a situation, going beyond the traditional support offered by the organization.³⁴⁶ These actions include intervention in the case of war crimes or crimes against humanity.³⁴⁷ Further actions include the mobilization of resources for the protection of IDPs and displaced populations regardless of the cause of displacement.³⁴⁸ The Convention further outlines the right of the displaced persons to make the decision to return to their area of origin, and if not, provide a sustainable transition.³⁴⁹ Even though this document was drafted in 2009, it did not enter into force until 2012 after it was ratified by 15 of the 54 AU Member States.³⁵⁰ This highlights the institutional challenges faced when establishing legal frameworks, especially the submission to oversight by international organizations.³⁵¹ Further, as situations evolve and include new causes of displacement such as disease, legal frameworks will have to be developed or modified to address novel challenges.³⁵²

³³⁶ *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Feller, *The Evolution of the International Refugee Protection Regime*.

³³⁹ *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

³⁴⁰ Organization of African Unity, *OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*, 1969.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² Brookings Institution & University of Bern, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: A Manual for Law and Policymakers*, 2008.

³⁴³ UN OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 2004.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ African Union, *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, 2009.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ Aneme & Lamikanra, *Update: Introduction to the Norms and Institutions of the African Union*, 2015.

³⁵² Fowler, *International Development Frameworks, Policies, Priorities and Implications*, 2003.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Broadly, disaster preparedness and response focuses on the preparation for large-scale natural disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, or fires, and preparation in response to technological/man-made disasters including famine, conflict, industrial accidents, and displaced populations.³⁵³ Events such as the 2014-2015 West African Ebola outbreak and to a lesser extent the 1994 Great Lakes Refugee Crisis have highlighted the need to expand preparedness and response mechanisms further to include population displacements.³⁵⁴ Existing frameworks provide the basic outline of community driven preparedness and response and have the potential to be expanded to address novel displacement situations.³⁵⁵

The *Sendai Framework for Action* (2015) is the outcome document from the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan held from 14-18 March 2015.³⁵⁶ This document builds upon the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (2005), the outcome document from the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, from 18-22 January 2005.³⁵⁷ Both the *Sendai Framework* and *Hyogo Framework* are successors to the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World* (1994), which was produced at the mid-point of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.³⁵⁸ The *Sendai Framework* particularly stresses the role of local communities taking responsibility for disaster risk reduction activities.³⁵⁹ These documents together expand upon the theme of disaster reduction, and the evolution of disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies can be seen in each subsequent document.³⁶⁰ These frameworks, while tailored toward natural and other large-scale disasters can be applied towards temporary displacements due to outbreak and disease, particularly in the area of community involvement and ownership, as it is vital to success because of the variation from traditional displacement patterns.³⁶¹

Role of the International System

Displaced populations fall under the responsibility of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).³⁶² UNHCR's expertise with displaced populations led to the adoption of the Humanitarian Reform, the Transformative Agenda, and the cluster coordination system.³⁶³ UNHCR outlines their public health strategy through the UNHCR Global Strategy for Public Health.³⁶⁴ This strategy outlines the objectives for public health, particularly in relation to HIV and reproductive health, food security and nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.³⁶⁵ These services are necessary during times of temporary and permanent displacement; with this document guiding actions to ensure services are appropriately delivered, regardless of the cause of displacement.³⁶⁶ These services are further strengthened by actions resulting from the Humanitarian Reform process.³⁶⁷

The Humanitarian Reform process began in 2005 and was led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and resulted in the issuance of the Transformative Agenda in 2011.³⁶⁸ The IASC was established in 1992 by General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 as a forum to facilitate the exchange of information and strengthen coordination between UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with particular attention paid to DRR, disaster preparedness, and response.³⁶⁹ The IASC membership includes all operational UN

³⁵³ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *What is a disaster?*

³⁵⁴ The Assessment Capacities Project, *Ebola in West Africa: Protection and Security*, 2014; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Overview 2015*, 2015.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015.

³⁵⁶ UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015.

³⁵⁷ UNISDR, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters*, 2007.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ UN DHA, *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*, 1994.

³⁶⁰ UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015.

³⁶¹ Tozier de la Poterie & Baudoïn, *From Yokohama to Sendai: Approaches to Participation in International Disaster Risk Reduction Frameworks*, 2015; UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015.

³⁶² UNHCR, *Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees and His Office*, 2013.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2015.

³⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Public Health*, 2014.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Key Messages: The IASC Transformative Agenda (IA/1206/4147)*, 2012.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC – Inter-Agency Standing Committee*.

organizations including UNHCR and a standing invitation to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the IFRC, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).³⁷⁰ Other relevant NGOs can be invited to be present at the IASC on an ad hoc basis.³⁷¹ NGOs are involved through the Global Cluster Coordination system.³⁷²

The Cluster Coordination system was established as a result of lessons learned during previous disasters, particularly the lack of coordination noted after the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami with UNHCR being the lead agency for the protection cluster.³⁷³ The Global Protection Cluster, one of the thematic clusters within the cluster approach, takes actions to ensure that “a world in which boys, girls, women and men affected or threatened by humanitarian crises are fully protected in accordance with their rights.”³⁷⁴ This includes protection of refugees and IDPs alike, and ensures that regardless of the local situation, the rights of the most vulnerable populations are protected.³⁷⁵ The Global Protection Cluster shares valuable information with other clusters to assist in the tracking of populations.³⁷⁶

In the case of displacement due to diseases, coordination amongst NGO, UN organizations, and local agencies will ensure that the most complete situation is being evaluated and responded to.³⁷⁷ NGOs familiar with the affected area will be able to provide relevant information regarding the affected populations due to their relationship with the affected populations.³⁷⁸

Early Warning Systems

Population tracking is often difficult in times of disaster and this is no different for outbreaks.³⁷⁹ Due to the unpredictable nature of outbreaks and the effect on the entire community, it is often even more challenging to ensure an adequate and complete picture of displacement patterns.³⁸⁰ The UNHCR Global Strategy for Public Health highlights the need for coordination within early warning systems and partner organizations in order to adequately deliver services after the identification of an epidemic.³⁸¹ Epidemics and outbreaks are often identified after the incidence rate has increased to a point that is difficult to address.³⁸² Epidemiological warning systems often provide the best method of identifying an outbreak, but there is a lack of coordination and standards throughout Member States and their respective national health organizations.³⁸³ While there are significant resources available at the UN level, such as the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) and locally established Early Warning Alert and Response System (EWARS), they are often not utilized until a situation has been identified through other means.³⁸⁴

EWARS systems are often established after a disaster or significant population displacement as a method of protecting population health and often rely on health workers to report on an established schedule all cases of specified conditions that have been seen.³⁸⁵ EWARS programs fall under the global health cluster and are often coordinated through the WHO representation in the field.³⁸⁶ In situations in which an EWARS system is established prior to an event for routine monitoring, it is difficult to scale up without additional material and human resources due to the level of complexity.³⁸⁷ GOARN provides additional resources for Member States once an outbreak has been identified and ensures the most appropriate experts are deployed in the shortest amount of time and provide

³⁷⁰ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC – Inter-Agency Standing Committee*.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² UN OCHA, *Cluster Coordination*, 2015.

³⁷³ Global Protection Cluster, *Who are we?*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ Twigg & Bottomley, *Making local partnerships work for disaster risk reduction*, 2015.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Gushulak, *The basic principles of migration health: Population mobility and gaps in disease prevalence*, 2006.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; Garcia, et al., *Modeling Internal Migration Flows in sub-Saharan Africa Using Census Microdata*, 2014.

³⁸¹ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Public Health*, 2014.

³⁸² Fokunang, et al., *The Public Health Perspective on Migratory Health – Displaced Populations in Global Disease Epidemics*, 2015.

³⁸³ Jebara, *Surveillance, detection and response: managing emerging disease at national and international levels*, 2004.

³⁸⁴ WHO, *Guiding Principles for International Outbreak Alert and Response*, 2015.

³⁸⁵ Nepal, *EWARS Weekly Bulletin – 28th Epidemiological Week*, 2015.

³⁸⁶ Pyle, *Assessment of Early Warning and Reporting Systems (EWARS) in Nepal*, 2004.

³⁸⁷ Mackenzie, et al., *The Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network*, 2014.

data analysis as well as further basic epidemic tracking assistance at the national level.³⁸⁸ For example, there has been an EWARS program running in Nepal since 1997 and was established as a collaboration between the WHO and the Nepal Ministry of Health and Population.³⁸⁹ This program was established in order to adequately monitor and track vector-borne and other diseases with a high likelihood of outbreak.³⁹⁰ The program, under primary control of the Ministry of Health and Population, has been augmented in times of natural disaster and humanitarian crises by UN organizations, most recently it was augmented by GOARN staff immediately following the April 2015 earthquake.³⁹¹ This is an example of the longer-term implementation of an EWARS program that was adapted for an acute event.³⁹² While many EWARS programs run for a limited period of time post humanitarian crisis, longer-term programs offer advantages such as identification of unusual disease patterns and epidemic tracking.³⁹³

Surveillance

Member States have varying levels of epidemiological surveillance systems set up through their national health organization.³⁹⁴ These surveillance systems are either active or passive, which vary in the method of reporting.³⁹⁵ Active surveillance is a routine check by a monitoring organization of all cases, often utilized to ensure complete reporting of all cases of a specific disease.³⁹⁶ Active surveillance often goes beyond traditional health care facilities and can utilize community members or community health workers going door to door to establish the true number of cases.³⁹⁷ While it does provide a comprehensive overview of the situation, active surveillance is resource intensive on both the local, regional, and national level, resulting in strain on those responsible for collecting data unless staff is augmented.³⁹⁸ Passive surveillance utilizes fewer resources, but relies upon health care workers to report cases to the national body as they develop, which can lead to inconsistent reporting due to lack of resources or motivation at the point of delivery.³⁹⁹ There is very little consistent involvement from a national body when passive surveillance is utilized and this method provides a less completed overview of the situation.⁴⁰⁰

While these methods are often utilized for disease surveillance, the practices can be combined with existing displacement tracking mechanisms to provide an almost real-time picture of population movement.⁴⁰¹ Existing displacement-tracking mechanisms such as the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix and the UNHCR Population Movement Tracking Initiative provide a comprehensive amount of information, but they are not suited for the detection of an outbreak event, as they are established after events have been identified.⁴⁰²

Strengthening Coordination Through the Use of Technology

Coordination between UN organizations, Member States, and NGOs has evolved significantly over the past few years due to the introduction of various technology and platforms.⁴⁰³ The accessibility of data has allowed organizations and representatives in the field to provide near real time updates to an open source system allowing decisions to be made quicker, with a more complete set of information.⁴⁰⁴ There has also been a significant increase in crowd-sourced information in recent large-scale disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.⁴⁰⁵ This information often provides a window into geographic areas that have not been evaluated or assessed by governmental or

³⁸⁸ WHO, *Global Outbreak and Response Network*, 2015; WHO, *Guiding Principles for International Outbreak Alert and Response*, 2015.

³⁸⁹ Nepal, *EWARS Weekly Bulletin – 28th Epidemiological Week*, 2015

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.; Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, *GOARN request for assistance: Earthquake Response, Nepal*, 2015.

³⁹² Nepal, *EWARS Weekly Bulletin – 28th Epidemiological Week*, 2015; Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, *GOARN request for assistance: Earthquake Response, Nepal*, 2015.

³⁹³ European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, *Health Technical Guidelines*, 2014.

³⁹⁴ London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, *Types of Surveillance*, 2009.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ IOM, *Displacement Tracking Matrix*; UNHCR, *Population Movement Tracking Monthly Report*, 2012.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ UN OCHA, *Global Disaster Alerts and Coordination Systems Guidelines*, 2014.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Digital Humanitarian Network, *What we do*.

international organizations.⁴⁰⁶ It is important to note that this information initially does not come through an established system, but often utilizes a common public created hashtag on social media to raise awareness.⁴⁰⁷ Once this occurs, organizations such as the Stand-By Task Force (SBTF) and other members of the Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN) scour social media for this information and utilize it to create a map of needs and provide this to organizations operating in affected areas.⁴⁰⁸ While crowd-sourced information is valuable, it is important to take into account that it is produced by laypersons and organizations processing the information such as SBTF and members of the DHN who are limited in their ability to verify the information being utilized.⁴⁰⁹ The data is usually provided with open-source geographic information system (GIS) data on various humanitarian exchange websites where it can be accessed by organizations operating in affected areas.⁴¹⁰

Coordination amongst organizations operating in affected areas additionally often relies on in-person meetings or the utilization of traditional telecommunication equipment.⁴¹¹ Online exchanges such as the PREVIEW global risk data platform, a collaborative effort between United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Resource Information Database (GRID-Geneva) provide a comprehensive overview of at risk areas, with the data provided through an online database with GIS data.⁴¹² Member States and other stakeholders can utilize platforms such as PREVIEW during the planning process and initial response to attempt to predict population displacement patterns.⁴¹³ Other resources being utilized include the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System and its associated virtual on-site operations coordination center.⁴¹⁴ These resources provide an additional resource that is available from any Internet connected device that allow agencies operating within affected areas to retrieve information as well as post their own self-generated information.⁴¹⁵ These technologies are invaluable but are resource-intensive, requiring a reliable source of electricity and access to a telecommunication network or the Internet, as well as requiring operators to be trained in their use and to be familiar with the material being collected and disseminated.⁴¹⁶ These resources are also limited by non-human factors, with significant areas of opportunity for community-driven development of local technologies.⁴¹⁷

Case Study: 2014-2015 Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in West Africa

On 27 December 2013, an 18-month old boy in Meliandou, Guinea developed a mysterious illness with fever, black stools, and vomiting, and died two days later.⁴¹⁸ Within a few weeks, members of the boy's family and the healthcare workers that treated them suffered from a similar disease, and subsequently died.⁴¹⁹ This was noticed by the local health post and reported to the Ministry of Health as a possible Cholera outbreak due to the symptoms being described.⁴²⁰ It was not until 21 March 2014 that the virus, which had spread to the capital Conakry and other districts, was identified as the Zaire strain of Ebola.⁴²¹ The virus ultimately spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone, resulting in almost 28,000 cases and at least 11,299 deaths.⁴²² Sierra Leone experienced the greatest number of cases in this outbreak, with few cases being identified early and with case identification expanding exponentially throughout the year to a peak in November 2014.⁴²³

⁴⁰⁶ Butler, *Crowdsourcing goes mainstream in typhoon response*, 2013.

⁴⁰⁷ Digital Humanitarian Network, *Catalogue*, 2015.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ IRIN, *Analysis: Potential, pitfalls of "big data" for humanitarians*, 2013.

⁴¹⁰ Butler, *Crowdsourcing goes mainstream in typhoon response*, 2013; Digital Humanitarian Network, *What we do*.

⁴¹¹ UN OCHA, *OSOCC and RDC*, 2015.

⁴¹² UNEP, *Global Risk Data Platform*, 2013.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ UN OCHA, *OSOCC and RDC*, 2015.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ Télécoms Sans Frontières, *Emergency Preparedness and Capacity Development*.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ WHO, *Origins of the 2014 Ebola Epidemic*, 2015.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² WHO, *Ebola Situation Report*, 2014.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

Displacement due to Disease

Displacement occurs frequently after conflict, violence, and disaster, but this outbreak indicated that there was significant displacement occurring from the spread of Ebola.⁴²⁴ As a result, this was the first event in which international organizations monitored displacement because of a disease.⁴²⁵ In Sierra Leone and other affected areas, the initial lack of information regarding the disease, its transmission, and prevention led to displacement into areas free from disease.⁴²⁶ As the outbreak progressed, a combination of forced quarantines and increased levels of fear led to Ebola being identified as a major “driver of migration”; 50% of those leaving some areas stated that the disease was their primary reason for leaving.⁴²⁷ Additional migration was also seen in response to limitations placed on movement in many of the most affected areas.⁴²⁸ Other areas that were identified as drivers of migration were people seeking healthcare, as appropriate Ebola Treatment Units were not initially available in all affected areas.⁴²⁹

Response and Recovery: Challenges

There has been significant criticism of the international response following the identification of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and other affected areas.⁴³⁰ Following the initial response, there was a large presence in all affected areas from international organizations with all clusters of the Cluster Coordination System present and operating.⁴³¹ A major issue identified in the humanitarian response within Sierra Leone however, was the general distrust of both foreign medical practitioners and the Ministry of Health.⁴³² This distrust likely derives from well-publicized corruption issues within the Ministry of Health, and unfamiliarity with foreign health workers.⁴³³ This distrust likely led to an underreported number of cases in affected areas as many affected by the disease would expire before news of their infection spread.⁴³⁴

While the local response proved challenging, there were also significant high-level coordination challenges that have been criticized by the public and partner organizations alike.⁴³⁵ It is unlikely that there was a single reason for the perceived inadequate response, but likely a combination of factors, both internal and external.⁴³⁶ Lack of comprehensive information, challenges accessing affected areas combined with unpredictable displacement and disease flows led to a situation in which there would be a delay in delivering services.⁴³⁷ Further, one of the main criticisms was the speed of the response and the perceived “business as usual” attitude that was taken by international organizations in response to the outbreak.⁴³⁸ Many organizations have significant experience in responding to large-scale disasters but were not prepared for a biological incident of this size, underestimated both the human and material resources required.⁴³⁹ Internal challenges were seen with significant numbers of healthcare workers being affected by the disease, resulting in further strain to the health system, as local practitioners were unable to liaise between local communities and foreign responders.⁴⁴⁰ There are also major differences in the response to an event like a typhoon in which the damage occurs over a finite period of time versus an epidemic that can evolve and be influenced by a host of other factors, including population displacement patterns, additional humanitarian events or disasters, and donor fatigue from governmental, non-governmental, private and individual sources.⁴⁴¹

⁴²⁴ Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014; The Assessment Capacities Project, *Ebola in West Africa: Protection and Security*, 2014.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ The Assessment Capacities Project, *Ebola in West Africa: Protection and Security*, 2014.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² WHO, *Factors That Contributed to the Undetected Spread of the Ebola Virus and Impeded Rapid Containment*, 2015.

⁴³³ Alexander, et al., *What Factors Might Have Led to the Emergence of Ebola in West Africa?* 2015.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Alexander, et al., *What Factors Might Have Led to the Emergence of Ebola in West Africa?* 2015.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.; Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014.

⁴³⁸ WHO, *Factors That Contributed to the Undetected Spread of the Ebola Virus and Impeded Rapid Containment*, 2015.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.; Welthungerhilfe, *Ebola in Sierra Leone*, 2014.

⁴⁴¹ Brooks, *Funding Shortfalls Highlight Strains on Humanitarian System*, 2015.



Conclusion

Displacement due to disease is a concept that has not been widely studied or observed but does have a significant impact on population health and the recovery of affected areas. While there are established protection mechanisms for IDPs and refugees as well as established systems for the detection and response to outbreak, there is a gap where the two intersect. The ability to adequately respond to a large, highly contagious epidemic pushed the capabilities of both Member States and responding international organizations, and through these challenges further development of resilient and flexible disaster response systems is paramount. Surveillance systems, both epidemiological and those tracking population displacement, provide an opportunity to further identify and ensure events are identified in the most expedient way possible. With large scale displacements occurring with greater frequency, Member States, international organizations, NGOs, and other stakeholders will have to ensure policies and practices adapt into best serve the affected populations.

Further Research

As delegates prepare to begin their own research, some key issues must be remembered: what role do existing mechanisms play in the identification of a large-scale displacement event and how can they be improved? What role does technology have in the initial response? What additional resources can be drawn upon to augment a strained national health system during an outbreak to provide adequate care for both displaced and non-displaced populations? What mechanisms can be established to ensure access to health does not become a cause for displacement? How can Member States further prevent corruption amongst health officials, particularly in time of crisis? What actions can be taken to strengthen the relationship between medical organizations operating in affected areas and the affected populations? What steps should be taken by the international community at the onset of the next outbreak or epidemic?

Annotated Bibliography

The Assessment Capacities Project. (2014). *Ebola in West Africa: Protection and Security*. Retrieved 23 August 2015 from: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/b-acaps_bn_ebola_west_africa_impact_protection_14_oct_2014.pdf

This short overview is an example of the protection and security situation in the Ebola affected areas. While many protection issues can be addressed through prior experiences, this document highlights the unique challenges that are being faced with a large-scale epidemic. This document should be utilized by delegates to provide context for the security situation in a large-scale epidemic and can provide a base for further research into the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak. The provision of protection is vital in humanitarian emergencies and delegates should be cognizant of the dynamic environment and actions taken to ensure that overall risks are minimized.

African Union. (2009). *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*. Retrieved 12 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ae9bede9.html>

This Convention provides a comprehensive overview of actions being taken by African Union (AU) Member States to address IDPs. While there are guidelines that apply to IDPs on a worldwide scale, region specific guidelines more appropriate address Member State's needs in the region. Delegates should pay particular attention to Article 8, and the obligations of the AU in protecting IDP rights. This document and its subsequent ratification process also highlight the challenges in establishing legal framework.

Fokunang, C., et al. (2015). The Public Health Perspective on Migratory Health – Displaced Populations in Global Disease Epidemics. In Dr. David Claborn (Ed.), *Topics in Public Health*. Retrieved 16 July 2015 from:

<http://www.intechopen.com/books/topics-in-public-health/the-public-health-perspective-on-migratory-health-displaced-populations-in-global-disease-epidemics>

The scale of the 2014 Ebola outbreak proved challenging for many organizations and this article examines displacement patterns secondary to the Ebola outbreak. This provides a strong base of resource for delegates to further pursue research in relation to disease and epidemic displacement. Delegates should utilize sources provided in the article to further research actions and patterns seen in the 2014 outbreak.

Medecins Sans Frontieres. (2015). *Pushed to the Limit*. Retrieved 23 August 2015 from:

http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf1yearebolareport_en_230315.pdf

This MSF report provides an in-depth look into the MSF response to Ebola in the calendar year that followed the initial deployment. Drawing from interviews with responders to the affected areas, this report provides examples of the successes and shortcomings seen in the response. Delegates should pay particular attention to the MSF internal challenges on page 18 that highlight the challenges faced as an organization. These challenges have been echoed by many organizations operating in affected areas and can be used as an example for future responses.

Thomas, S. & S. Thomas. (2004). *Displacement and Health*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from:

<http://bmb.oxfordjournals.org/content/69/1/115.full>

This article provides a comprehensive overview of the impact of displacements on the health of populations. While the overall focus is on the health of displaced populations, delegates should utilize this article to strengthen their understanding of population health and the vulnerability of displaced populations. This article highlights the importance of the provision of adequate health services amongst displaced populations, particularly in cases where the displacement is secondary to an outbreak or epidemic. Delegates should pay particular attention to the methods utilized to ensure health services are maintained in times of crisis.

United Nations Children's Fund. (2015). *Ebola: Getting to Zero – for communities, for Children, for the future* [Report]. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from: <http://www.unicef.org/emergencies/ebola/files/EbolaReport.pdf>

UNICEF provides comprehensive information regarding children in disaster situations. This document provides an overview of efforts to bring the Ebola transmission rate to zero. Delegates should pay particular attention to the protection aspects of the document as it provides an outline

for UNHCR global protection cluster activities. This documents also provides comprehensive information on challenges facing children and can be used to predict potential future displacement patterns.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *Measure to Contain and Combat the Recent Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (A/RES/69/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/1>

This GA resolution provides a brief overview of the high-level actions being taken towards the 2014 Ebola outbreak. Delegates should pay particular attention to the importance placed upon this resolution and the practical impact on UN organizations. This Resolution provided further framework for the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, which is the operational mission in Ebola affected areas.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Public Health*. Retrieved 10 August 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f12d26.pdf>

The UNHCR Global Strategy for Public Health stresses the importance of delivery of key services to ensure that refugees, IDPs, and other vulnerable populations are provided with adequate health and WASH resources. Delegates should pay particular attention to the data provided that highlights improvement of key indicators over the past decade as well as the targets for the next four years. This document also provides examples of successful partnerships with other UN organizations and NGOs to provide appropriate services.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Ebola Response Plan: January-December 2015*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/54f47ae5575.html>

This report highlights the actions to be taken through the 2015 calendar year in the Ebola-affected areas. Particular attention should be paid to the focus on ensuring the delivery of essential services and the prevention of further outbreaks. While this is a concise source, it does highlight the actions being taken in affected areas and the long-term impact of said actions. Delegates should be cognizant of the scope of the document, particularly the impact on non-affect areas.

United Nations, Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2015). *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from:

http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai_Framework_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_2015-2030.pdf

The Sendai Framework for Action provides a comprehensive overview of the actions to be taken by the international community over the next 15 years in relation to disaster risk reduction. While many of the suggestions outlined in this document focus on natural disasters, the strategies utilized provided a starting point for further research into outbreaks and epidemics. Delegates should pay close attention to the importance of community in the recovery process, particularly the “Build Back Better” strategy.

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