

**FINAL DRAFT**  
**IDP Strategy for Afghanistan**  
**Consultative Group on Returnees & IDPs**

**Introduction:**

Afghanistan continues to have a large IDP population and President Karzai has repeatedly stated that it is a key priority of the government to address and resolve this problem. Since 2001, there has been a considerable reduction of the IDP population in Afghanistan due to progress in the peace process and mitigation of drought conditions (estimated figures: 2 million in 2001, 1,2 million in 2002 and 600,000 at the beginning of 2003).

This proposed strategy – still in concise form – is aimed at finding solutions to internal displacement in its various forms, while at the same time continuing to provide protection and (whenever required) assistance to IDP populations.

- **Projected planning figures for December 2003:** estimated 300,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements the South and West), December 2004: 180,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements in the South) [figures will need thorough revalidation in 2003]
- **Assumptions:** continued peace process with limited periods of instability, slow pace of development, further drought mitigation, government increases its engagement with IDPs, donors continue to provide support for humanitarian and development interventions
- **Goal:** In cooperation with government and other actors, find effective solutions for people displaced by drought and human rights violations or conflict, and prevent further displacement in accordance with the UN guiding principles on internal displacement, humanitarian standards and in the framework of relevant national IDP regulations.
- **Key Actors:**
  - a) **Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation** - As the chair of the Consultative Group for Returnees and IDPs, MoRR has the overall responsibility of leading the IDP issue. MoRR will focus on policy development, assessment, evaluation and monitor the implementation of this strategy. Given the complex and multi-sectoral task of executing this strategy, which requires integrated planning and co-ordination among a range of government and assistance actors, MoRR will ensure the participation of all the concerned government Ministries and lead policy discussions at the government level to seek solutions to the IDP situation.
  - b) **Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing** - As members of the Consultative Group for Returnees and IDPs, MRRD and MUDH will have an active role in supporting MoRR and other actors in the implementation of this strategy, particularly in areas of reintegration and longer-term solutions for IDPs. MRRD will ensure that the IDP concerns, where possible, are mainstreamed into the national development programmes lead by the Ministry (Consultative Group on Livelihoods and Social Protection). Meanwhile, MUDH will build the reintegration concerns of urban IDPs in its main programmes and planning areas through the Consultative Group on Urban Management.
  - c) **UNHCR** - As the focal point of the Consultative Group for Returnees and IDPs, chaired by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR), UNHCR will focus on support to MoRR and MRRD and provide information, operational support to the existing caseload in the main settlements, longer-term solutions for protection cases and linkages with the Pakistan and Iran refugee caseload.
  - d) **Other Agencies and NGOs** – UNAMA will collaborate with MRRD on the longer-term solutions for the drought affected IDPs including Pastoralists. WFP is the key partner providing food for IDPs in need of support and UNICEF is focussing on support to children, women and provision of water and health. National and international NGOs are the main implementing agencies. IOM is providing return transport assistance mainly in the West, North and Centre of Afghanistan.

## **Key Strategies and Interventions:**

Given the different profiles of the IDPs, all activities need to be tailored to specific needs, resources and opportunities of each group.

### **1. Prevention of displacement (MoRR, MRRD):**

- Seek legal framework to prevent new displacements, and find solutions for the present caseload. (MoRR/UNHCR).
- **monitor** new drought and human rights related IDP movements by providing reports on new arrivals every 2 weeks (MoRR with UNHCR's support, with other partners),
- **targeted interventions** in critical **drought**-affected areas by key actors, including drought/water surveys, joint programming and continuous monitoring (MRRD and UNAMA to be supported by UNICEF, WFP, FAO, PCBs, Regional Programme Initiatives)
- **targeted interventions** in areas where **human rights** violations continue to generate displacement (MoRR, local authorities, UNAMA, UNHCR, Return Commission in the North-West and other mechanisms regrouping key actors, as required)
- ensure **sustainability** for areas with large number of returnees (MoRR, MRRD, UNAMA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, PCBs)

### **2. Support to existing IDPs (MoRR's and UNHCR's main areas of intervention)**

- **Number of IDPs:** focus on IDPs in main settlements, IDPs who have registered for return and new arrivals (active caseload). Most persons registered as IDPs living in villages and cities have not been receiving assistance for years and are presumed to have successfully integrated.
- **Profile** the main IDP settlements (e.g. Maslakh, Shaidayee, Spin Boldak, Zhary Dasht, Panjwaj, Maiwand and Mukhtar) and any new arrivals.
- **Protection and balanced assistance.** New arrivals and IDPs in the main settlements should have access to protection and assistance. MoRR, UNHCR and its partners ensure that minimum standards in the main IDP settlements are met (security, food, shelter, water, health and basic education). Since many IDPs have found some form of livelihood, assistance should be tailored for each caseload and settlement. UNHCR will pay particular attention to the protection cases (e.g. Pushtoons from Northwest and Badghis, Gujurs from Northeast, Tajiks from Central Highlands, displaced Hazaras from southern parts of the Central Highlands, Pastoralists who have been denied access to their grazing lands)
- **Government capacity:** Engage government (MoRR, MRRD, local authorities) in strategy, operations and finding long-term solutions for IDPs
- **Return assistance:** provide adequate information, facilitate "go and see" visits for potential IDP returnees, provide return packages and transport to returnees (MoRR, UNHCR, WFP, IOM and partners). Prioritize IDPs from areas, which recovered from drought effects (North and West).
- **Monitoring of IDP returnees:** Special needs and constraints of returning IDPs to be monitored (MoRR, MRRD, UNAMA, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and partners)
- **Transition to self-supporting communities:** During their stay in camps and settlements, IDPs should reduce their dependency on external support through income generation projects and local work opportunities. Regular free food rations should be provided to the most vulnerable only (EVIs) and as food for work for others without income. Some of the IDP settlements have become de facto local villages. These villages should be folded into the national programmes of MRRD and integrated into the local administration. In Southern Afghanistan MoRR, MRRD, UNHCR and UNAMA have established a small working group focusing on the transition process from IDP settlements to local villages (see below, Longer-term solutions).

### **3. Search for longer term solutions**

In the promotion of longer-term solutions, MoRR and UNHCR will take the lead for protection-related IDPs whereas victims of drought including most of the Pastoralists require interventions that are broader in scope. For these groups, MRRD and UNAMA will provide the key support in seeking longer-term solutions in the context of national programmes (NSP, NEEP and multi-sectoral initiatives integrated programming and

Ogata Initiative). All Actors will support the government in establishing National and local frameworks to seek long term solutions for present IDP situation. Following key interventions towards longer-term solutions should promote increased ownership by the central and local authorities:

- **Return of Protection IDPs:** Through active monitoring of the situation of Pashtuns in the North and other displaced groups, provide accurate information, support confidence building measures and facilitate “go and see” and “come and explain” visits. Such visits will also include discussions between the local authorities and the IDP representatives to seek guarantees upon return. Given that most of the displaced protection cases are Pashtun from the North-West, continue to support the work of the Return Commission and its Working Groups (MoRR, UNHCR, UNAMA). The possible return of protection IDPs, mainly from the South will be carefully monitored by UNHCR, MoRR and RCWG (Return Commission Working Groups). Similar mechanisms such as the Bamyán Return Shura will help monitor, provide key information on obstacles and identify solutions for the return of IDPs to other areas.
- **Drought-affected IDPs, Prioritized Areas:** Identify areas of high potential IDP return and support action leading to prioritized development in such areas, e.g. joint programming, inclusion in national programmes such as NEEP, NSP, NABDP (MoRR, MRRD, UNAMA, UNHCR, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, other development actors). Such targeted interventions will prevent further displacement and enable IDPs to return to their communities.
- **Pastoralists:** Pastoralist IDPs are mainly concentrated in the South, which form more than 70% of the total IDP caseload in the region. Pastoralists, affected by drought and conflict, need tailored support to either resume nomadic life or change to different forms of non-nomadic livelihood. This will be coordinated through a working group lead by MoRR, MRRD and the Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs. UNHCR, UNAMA, local authorities and other partners will support this group. The main task of this group will be to establish an implementation plan, which assists Pastoralists to return to nomadic life style and/or identify alternative or additional income generation activities (like VARA/Cordaid study)
- **Local Settlement:** IDPs who are not able to return (some Pashtuns from the North, long-term drought victims) require support to settle (e.g. urban areas, in/near IDP settlements, and possibility of land allocation on the basis of national selection mechanism). It is suggested that following a period of 1-2 years of facilitation of return, the camps with the remaining caseload be transformed into local communities and be folded into the regular social policy scheme. This gradual transition should be mapped out with the local and central authorities by autumn 2004. MRRD and UNAMA will support and coordinate this process with technical advice from UNHCR (land issues).