



Workshop on durable solutions for internally displaced people

The National Commission on Land and Other Properties (*Commission Nationale des Terres et Autres Biens* or CNTB) in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) organised a workshop on the role of the CNTB in promoting durable solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs), on 10 November 2011 at *Chez André* in Bujumbura.

The session gathered representatives of the provincial delegations of the CNTB who were working on land issues facing IDPs, and also national and international actors engaged in land issues or the promotion of durable solutions for IDPs. The Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender, the Project for the Reintegration of War-Affected Persons (*Projet d'appui au rapatriement et à la réintégration des sinistrés* or PARESI), the Ministry of Water, the Environment, Land and Urban Planning, and the Ministry of the Interior and Communal Development were also represented, while a representative of UNHCR also took part.

The workshops gave the CNTB the opportunity to present its work on mediation and land dispute resolution in favour of populations affected by conflict, and to determine how the experience it has gained could contribute to the efforts of the Burundian government and international actors to promote durable solutions for IDPs.

The CNTB presentation highlighted different types of dispute, and in particular those involving demands for restitution or compensation by displaced occupiers of land. The CNTB's favoured method for resolving such conflicts, which have been identified in more than 30 IDP settlements, has been mediation. There are several criteria for resolving land disputes, such as the existence of other land for one of the parties, the existence of a contract, or work carried out to use or improve the land. Any criterion can take priority, according to the situation.

The presentations which followed recalled the three settlement options through which IDPs can achieve durable solutions, namely return, local integration and settlement elsewhere in the country. The national strategy for the reintegration of people affected by the conflict provides for all three, in line with the UN-endorsed Framework for Durable Solutions. Local integration presents a particular range of challenges, which make it necessary to resolve land disputes and also transform IDP settlements into real villages. The example of integrated rural villages presented in the workshop showed a possible

way ahead by means of a multi-sectoral community-based approach, but also showed the potential difficulties such as lack of funds and problems of coordinating the actions of different parties. The new land code, by offering rural communities a more flexible and appropriate process for ensuring security of tenure, could help IDPs certify their land, whether they return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere. Finally, the new national villagisation programme, which foresees that some of the population move into villages so that land used is rationalised and access to basic services improved, offers opportunities to IDPs as well as to repatriated refugees if it included a stream for “vulnerable people”.

In order to maximise the synergies between the CNTB and the different ministries with a role to play in promoting durable solutions for IDPs, the participants drew up the following recommendations:

- Invite the Director of Village to present the villagisation policy to the working group on IDPs (*Groupe de travail sur les personnes déplacées internes* or GTPDI), to enable a better understanding of the links between the policy and the search for durable solutions for IDPs;
- Support the sharing of experiences of the various provincial delegations of the CNTB and promote study trips to other countries attempting to resolve land disputes affecting IDPs and repatriated refugees;
- Organise similar workshops in the provinces, and continue training courses on the framework for durable solutions for provincial and communal officials and partners of the CNTB;
- Develop active cooperation between government offices, including in particular those responsible for land-use planning and the promotion of villages, to facilitate the reintegration of IDPs;
- Ensure technical and financial support is provided by organisations and partners to enable the CNTB to pursue activities;
- Transform IDP settlements on public land into villages if there is more public land around them;
- If IDP settlements are partly situated on private land, the CNTB could facilitate consultations between landowners and IDPs;
- As far as possible, the CNTB should build on its cooperation with national and local land management officials, and with other offices and ministries with a role in land management;
- Raise awareness of government officials of the land code.