



BRIEFING PAPER

Leaving no one behind: Internal displacement and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

25 SEPTEMBER 2015

To ensure inclusive and sustainable progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, member states will need to:

- 1. Support durable solutions¹ to displacement.** Internally displaced persons (IDPs)² are among the world's most vulnerable people. To avoid leaving them behind, development policies and interventions must reduce the risk of displacement and address the need for solutions for the tens of millions of people displaced each year.
- 2. Pay particular attention to people facing the debilitating impacts of long-term and/or repeated displacement.** People caught in such situations are likely to see their resilience eroded over time together with a heightened risk of impoverishment and exposure to further cycles of crisis. In implementing the SDGs, care should be taken to ensure they are identified and not forgotten before solutions are found.
- 3. Ensure that development projects minimise displacement and protect**

the people who are displaced from impoverishment and marginalisation.

The protection of displaced people should be a priority, to ensure that they benefit rather than suffer as a result of development interventions. This includes projects to develop infrastructure, exploit or manage natural resources, reduce disaster risk and mitigate or adapt to climate change.

- 4. Improve national data collection and develop indicators on internal displacement to ensure the inclusion of IDPs and vulnerable communities and guide the allocation of resources to where they are most needed.** Governments should strengthen the capacity of national statistics offices and local-level authorities to monitor and collect disaggregated data on IDPs systematically and over the duration of their displacement to inform understanding of both the vulnerability and resilience of communities at risk.

Key references in the 2030 agenda text:

Declaration:

4. (leaving no one behind)
14. (threats to development progress, ref. forced displacement)
23. (vulnerable people, ref. IDPs)

Goals and targets:

- 10.7 (facilitate migration and mobility of people)
- 17.18 (better and disaggregated data including sex, age, migratory status, geographic location)

Follow-up and review:

- 74.e (focus on those furthest behind)
- 74.g (disaggregated data, including sex, age, migration status)

Locating internal displacement within the 2030 agenda

Following 18 months of consultation and negotiations between UN member states, a universal agenda on sustainable development for the next 15 years has been proposed for adoption at the 25 September summit in New York. The outcome document is ambitious in scope and puts forward 17 goals, the SDGs, and 169 accompanying targets to eradicate poverty, combat inequalities, build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, protect human rights, improve gender equality and protect the planet.³

While the agenda does not include a specific goal or target on displacement or internally displaced people (IDPs), the declaration acknowledges the issue as one of global concern. Paragraph 14 states:

“Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.”

The outcome document also includes a commitment to “cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration” that respects the rights of displaced people, migrants and refugees, and affords them humane treatment.⁴ The text would appear to point to people who flee across borders, but international cooperation is also important in preventing and preparing for internal displacement which, it should be noted, often precedes flight across borders and which has drivers - including both conflict and natural hazard events - that in some cases transcend national borders.

The tenth SDG, which focuses on reducing inequalities, includes a related target – no. 10.7 – to facilitate “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. The reference to “mobility of people” might be interpreted as establishing a link between long-term crisis prevention and humanitarian preparedness measures that prevent or manage displacement, such as through safely executed evacuations or through planned and voluntary processes to enable people to relocate from areas that are increasingly unsafe for habitation.

Perhaps of greatest importance, IDPs are specifically mentioned in the outcome document for the 2030 agenda as a vulnerable group who must be empowered through efforts to achieve the SDGs.⁵ As the UN special rapporteur on IDPs’ human rights, Chaloka Beyani, has explained, they must form an integral part of the agenda and its implementation if it is to live up to its pledge to secure dignity and progress for all.⁶

IDPs are among those most at risk of being “left behind”

Member states adopting the SDGs will pledge to ensure that “no one is left behind” in efforts to achieve them, and that people in the most vulnerable situations will be prioritised. Men, women and children who are displaced within their countries of residence as a result of conflict, disasters, development projects and other causes are among those most likely to be excluded from social and economic opportunities for development. Many face increased vulnerability to further cycles of displacement when durable solutions that reduce the risks they face are not found.

At the same time, IDPs are survivors of crisis whose positive contributions to development gains are curtailed or lost if they are unable to quickly re-establish their lives back home or through integrating in their areas of refuge or settling elsewhere. IDPs’ full participation in the decisions that affect them enables their contribution to the social and economic development of the communities they return to or become new members of.

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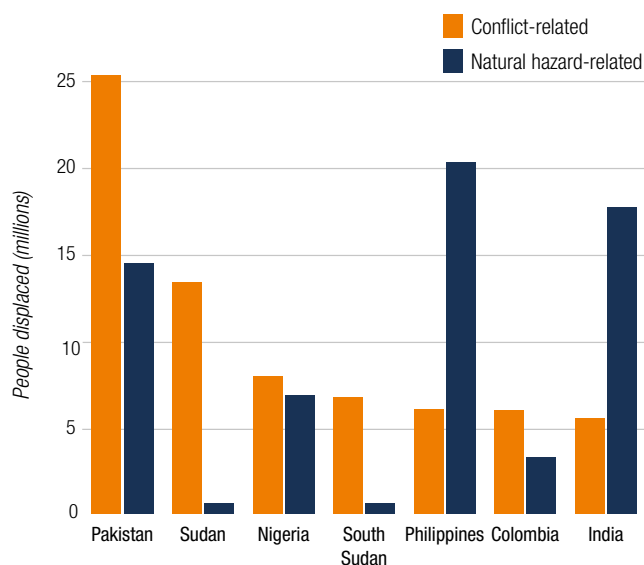
The complex process of ensuring durable solutions for IDPs requires that they be included in sustainable development strategies that protect their dignity, restore them to conditions of normality, and provide for a secure future.⁷

Displacement is a growing global issue

Around 11 million people in 60 countries fled their homes as a result of conflict and violence in 2014 alone, and 19.3 million in 100 countries were newly displaced by disasters.⁸ An average of 26.4 million people have been newly displaced by disasters each year since 2008, and 6.2 million by conflict, while complex displacement situations in many countries result from a combination of both disasters and conflict. These high levels of new displacement come on top of the millions of people already internally displaced and whose needs have gone unaddressed for extended periods.⁹

As a result, the number of people forced to leave their homes by conflict and disasters is rising inexorably. Decade after decade, disaster related losses are increasing worldwide as growing numbers of people and assets are exposed to natural hazards at a rate that outpaces efforts to reduce

Countries with the highest levels of new displacement associated with both disasters and conflict, 2010-2014



Note: Countries with at least 250,000 people newly displaced related to conflict and at least 250,000 related to natural hazards. Conflict refers to both armed conflict and generalised violence
Source of data: IDMC, conflict-related data as of 6 May 2015 and natural hazard-related data as of 1 June 2015

vulnerability and strengthen resilience to their impacts.¹⁰ The number of conflicts has also risen over the past decade, and repeated cycles of violence are common.¹¹ In many cases returning to their homes is not a safe or viable option for IDPs, and alternative settlement options are inadequately facilitated or significantly delayed.¹²

Displacement is commonly addressed as a humanitarian problem, but it is also a sustainable development challenge.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change is projected to exacerbate displacement, including through the impact of more frequent and intense weather-related hazards. Furthermore, it “can indirectly increase the risk of violent conflict by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts, such as poverty and economic shocks”.¹³

Displacement undermines poverty eradication

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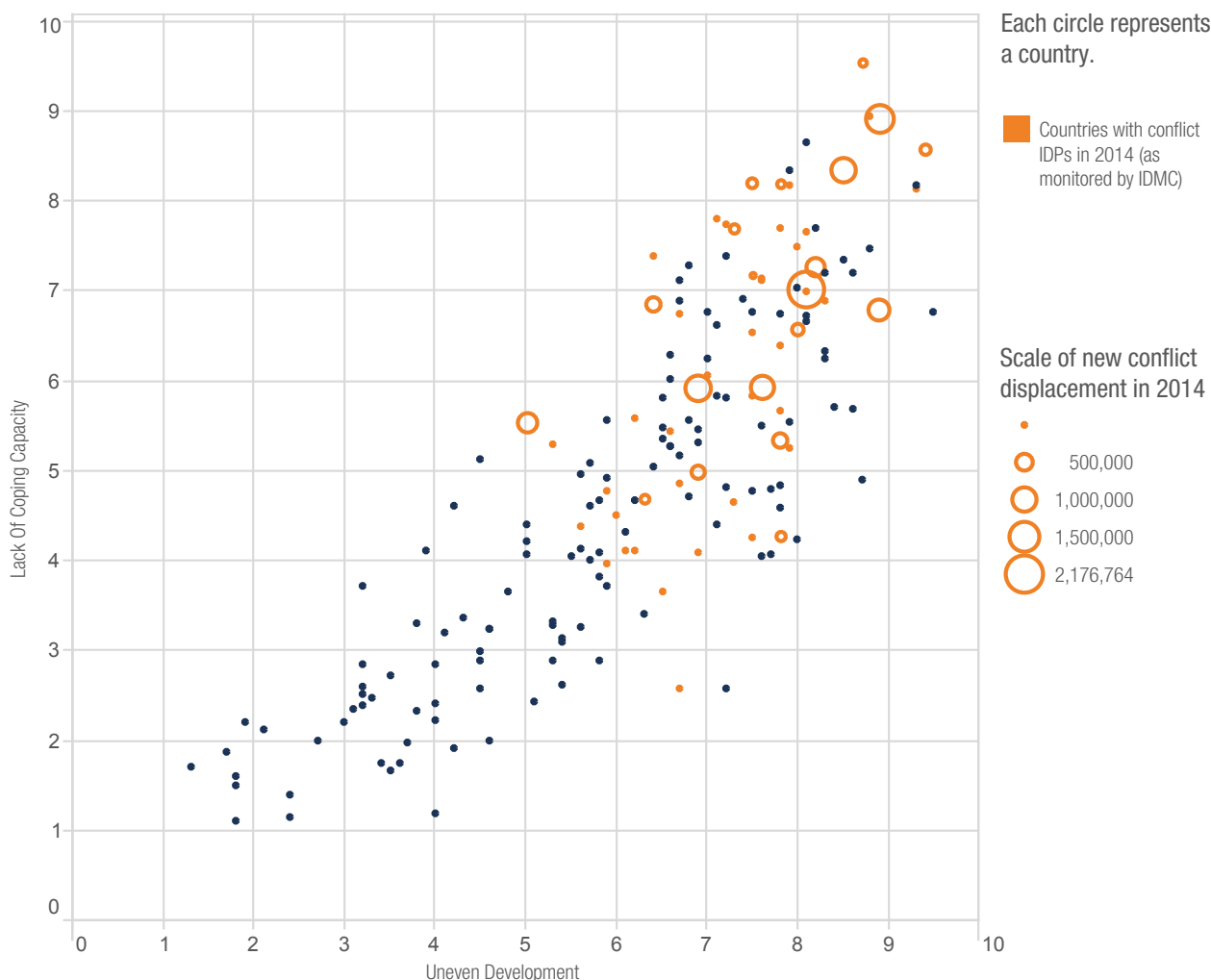
It is closely associated with poverty, inequality, insecurity, environmental degradation, exposure to hazards and the vulnerability of populations whose governments are unable or unwilling to protect them. In fact, it is often both a cause and a consequence of such issues. Livelihoods, economic activity and capacities that strengthen communities' resilience are seriously compromised when people are forced to flee their homes as a result of a crisis.

It comes as no surprise that developing countries are disproportionately affected by displacement, and that they are less able to reduce the risk of it taking place or cope with its impacts. That said, disasters in particular also cause significant displacement in high-income countries, where inequality leaves impoverished and marginalised groups more likely to suffer its effects.

As shown in the graph below, the largest disaster displacements triggered by natural hazard events are mostly found in countries with the lower income levels, while the largest cases of conflict displacement are found in countries with the least coping capacity and the most uneven patterns of development. This underscores the relationship between displacement and pre-existing patterns of poverty and inequality.

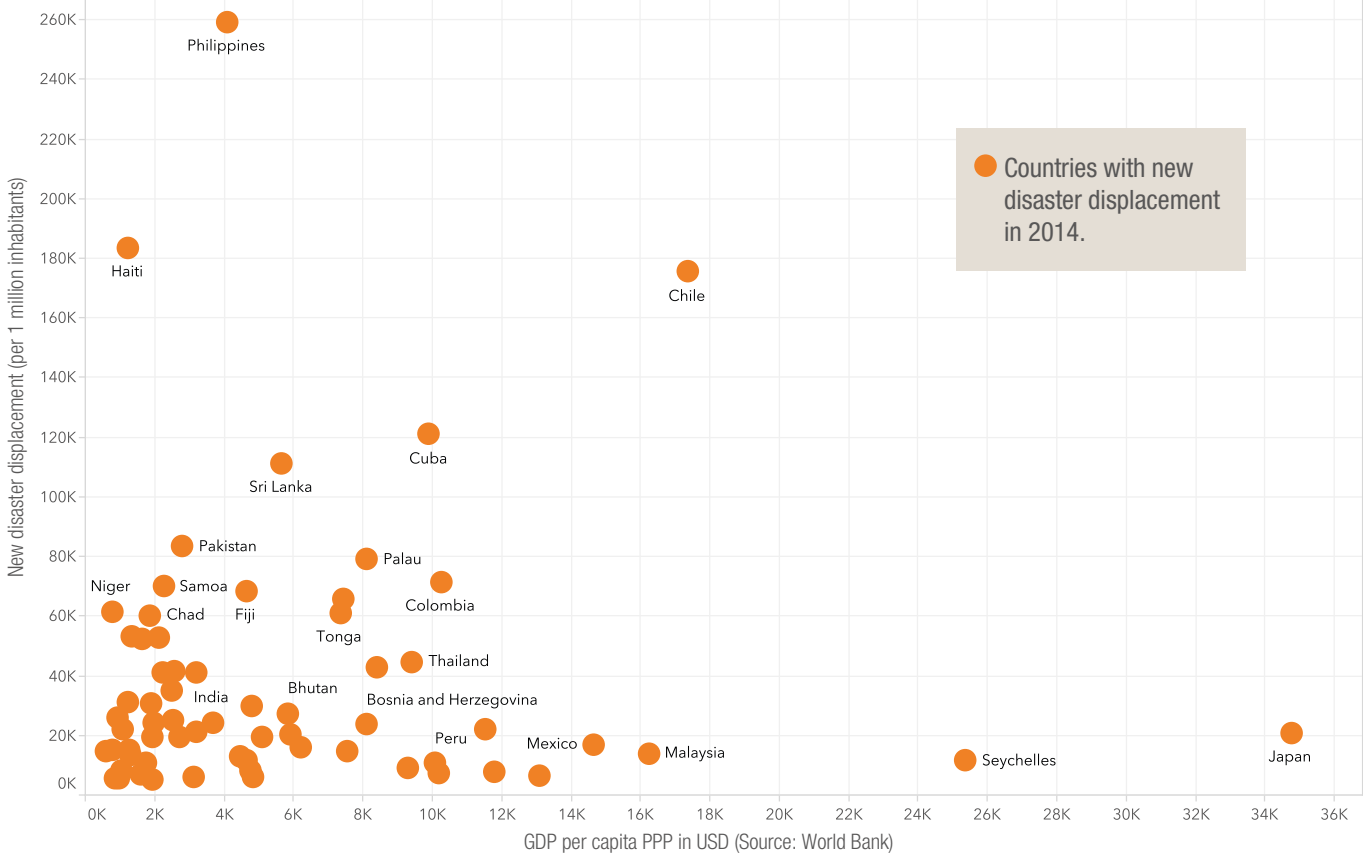
Peace-building, the sustainable management of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation are key elements of sustainable develop-

Countries with the least coping capacity and most uneven development are worst affected by conflict displacement



Sources: Lack of coping capacity: INFORM- Index for Risk Management (<http://www.inform-index.org>); Uneven development: Fragile States Index

Countries with low GDP per capita are disproportionately affected by disaster displacement



ment,¹⁴ and they are also vital in reducing the occurrence and impact of displacement, improving the resilience of families and communities and facilitating the achievement of durable solutions.

In 54 of the 60 conflict-affected countries we monitor, many have been displaced for more than 10 years.

As member states embark on implementing the most ambitious sustainable development agenda to date in partnership with broad elements of civil society and the private sector, they will need to be particularly careful to avoid not only leaving vulnerable people behind, but also creating new poor and marginalised populations.

Protracted and recurrent displacement is of particular concern

IDMC’s data highlights patterns of protracted and recurrent displacement worldwide. As of the end of 2014, the cumulative number of people displaced by conflict stood at a record high of 38 million, including around 7.6 million in Syria, six million in Colombia and 3.1 million in Sudan. In 54 of the 60 conflict-affected countries we monitor, many have been displaced for more than 10 years. Our estimates reveal that countries in which conflict drives displacement have reported the presence of IDPs over an average period of 23 years. This is evidence that governments tend to struggle with persistent caseloads, and that displacement is not easily resolved. The same factors that force people to flee in the first place often create obstacles to the achievement of durable solutions and

displacement can sometimes be prolonged by a government’s deliberate politicisation of the situation or its refusal to enter into the formal resolution of a crisis.

Hundreds of thousands more people uprooted by disasters have been living in displacement for many years, with the most vulnerable people disproportionately affected. This includes some 13,100 people in Bangladesh who have been displaced for over six years since the Cyclone Aila disaster in 2009, over 64,000 still living in displacement camps since the 2011 Haiti earthquake, and 11,000 people displaced for over 10 years since the eruption of Manam volcano in Papua New Guinea left their home island uninhabitable. High-income countries are also affected, as seen in the aftermath of the Tohoku earthquake, tsunami and nuclear contamination disaster, which continues to leave some 230,000 people displaced in Japan four years on.¹⁵

Protracted and recurrent displacement situations drain resources at all levels, from household to international. They erode the resilience and undermine the development prospects of the vulnerable people affected. Many have lost their homes, property and livelihoods more than once, pushing them beyond the point where they are able to recover without help. IDPs also often face violence, abuse and exploitation in their places of refuge.¹⁶

As in conflict-related situations, many of the obstacles to durable solutions in the aftermath of disaster are inherently political, including access to land, discrimination and corruption, while some types of hazard, such as in the case of the Manam volcano, can become a permanent barrier to return. Repeated cycles of temporary flight and return may also contribute to protracted displacement and eventual settlement elsewhere.

Whatever the proximate cause of displacement, women, children, older people and people with disabilities tend to be

particularly vulnerable. They often have more difficulty in finding employment and adequate housing and accessing basic services, which hinders their ability to establish livelihoods, undermines their food security and increases their susceptibility to future shocks and crises.¹⁷ Displaced children can face discrimination in getting their birth registered and their access to education.¹⁸ Such issues drive impoverishment, feed further cycles of crisis and reduce the likelihood of those affected being able to re-establish or improve their lives.

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People displaced by development projects often face impoverishment

The development projects of governments, agencies, and private sector companies such as mining, the construction of oil and gas pipelines, urban renewal schemes, dams, ports and transport infrastructure are major drivers of displacement, and the protection, restoration and improvement of the lives and livelihoods of those subject to involuntary resettlement is frequently inadequate.¹⁹ According to a conservative estimate published in 2008, about 280-300 million people were displaced by development projects over 20 years, or 15 million people annually.²⁰

Impoverishment is a widespread effect of this displacement as many lose their land, jobs, homes and access to common property resources, experience increased food insecurity and morbidity, and suffer from community disarticulation and marginalization as a result.²¹ Minimising resettlement and protecting people from impoverishment where their relocation becomes unavoidable should be a priority, to ensure that they benefit rather than suffer as a result of development interventions.

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Development-type projects that aim to mitigate climate change, adapt to its impacts or reduce disaster risk, and which involve the displacement and involuntary relocation of communities, may have similarly negative impacts. Climate change mitigation policies such as the increased production of biofuels are arguably well intentioned, but they require the acquisition of large tracts of agricultural land. In this context also the rights of local populations may be overlooked and have led to the displacement of whole communities.²² In 2007, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues warned that many thousands of indigenous people were being pushed off their lands as forests were cleared to make way for the expansion of oil palm cultivation as a biofuel crop.²³

Similarly, relocation or resettlement programmes that are implemented in order to remove people from exposure to

disaster risk or adapt to climate change impacts, are also a cause of concern when they take place without respect for the human rights of those affected and due attention to long-lasting impacts on people's lives including the breakup of communities and psychological distress.²⁴ Experience shows that such relocations are not sustainable unless they are undertaken with the participation of all those affected - men, women and children from both displaced and host communities - and if the preservation of livelihoods and cultural traditions is not given due attention.²⁵

Development plans and strategies should respect international standards on evictions, resettlement and IDPs' protection in order to prevent displacement wherever possible and ensure that those who are displaced are able to re-establish and improve their lives in their new places of residence.²⁶

Better displacement data is needed to monitor progress and facilitate inclusion

Governments could do much to ensure that IDPs are not forgotten or side-lined in development processes by improving their collection of disaggregated data and monitoring of displacement. The outcome document for the 2030 agenda emphasises the importance of the systematic collection of data necessary to measure and inform progress towards the SDGs. Target 17.18 recognises the need to help developing countries increase their capacity to gather data that is disaggregated by "migratory status", sex, age and other characteristics:

"By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts."

Paragraph 74.g covers similar ground in relation to follow-up and review processes:

"They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts."

Governments should strengthen the capacity of national statistics offices and local-level authorities to monitor and collect disaggregated data on IDPs systematically and over the duration of their displacement to inform understanding of both the vulnerability and resilience of communities at risk.

Indicators that explicitly track displacement as a global driver and outcome of vulnerability would make an important contribution to informing member states' understanding of both losses and resilience

In the absence of a specific target on displacement, indicators that explicitly track displacement as a global driver and outcome of vulnerability would make an important contribution to informing member states' understanding of

both losses and resilience. Available data and established methodologies that already enable the quantification of displacement at national and global levels - either directly or via close proxies - could inform the measurement of displacement under the SDG targets, but will need to be strengthened over the next period. Data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics of displaced populations, particularly in relation to long-lasting or protracted situations, is a major gap that should be addressed.

It should be noted that draft indicators still under consideration at the time of the SDGs adoption only refer to evacuations and relocations related to disasters, which are inadequate to tracking the broader phenomenon of displacement in these contexts, while situations related to conflict and development projects are wholly unaddressed.²⁷ The draft indicators also focus on the measurement of losses and do not look to measure resilience, particularly in relation to IDPs' access to safe and sustainable solutions to their displacement. Improvements in the quality and recording of comprehensive data about internal displacement, and the setting of indicators that measure its impacts worldwide and across the SDGs, is a basic but critical step to ensure millions of internally displaced people are not left behind.

Notes

1. See the IASC Operational Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, April 2010
2. An internally displaced person (IDP) is defined by the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border."
3. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, available at <https://goo.gl/IAaWkz>
4. *Ibid*, paragraph 35
5. *Ibid*, paragraph 23
6. UN, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani (A/HRC/29/34), 01 April 2015
7. *Ibid*
8. IDMC, Global Overview 2015: People displaced by conflict and violence, available at <http://goo.gl/LIW3BO>; IDMC, Global Esti-

9. See latest IDMC global figures at www.internal-displacement.org/globalfigures/
10. UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030, paragraph 4, available at <http://goo.gl/hGx9tk>
11. Journal of Peace and Research, Armed conflicts, 1946–2014, July 2015, available at <http://goo.gl/4vwYaf>; World Bank, Violence and Fragility, chapter 1, 2011, available at <http://goo.gl/kxwpx8>
12. *Ibid*
13. IPCC, Assessment Report Five, 2013, available at <http://goo.gl/H9FsGI>
14. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 35, available at <https://goo.gl/IAaWkz>
15. IDMC Global Estimates 2015: People displaced by disaster, Annex C, pp. 92-99
16. *Ibid*, Global Overview 2015
17. *Ibid*, p.65, and Global Overview 2015: People displaced by conflict and violence, available at <http://goo.gl/LIW3BO>
18. *Ibid*, Global Overview 2015, p.65
19. Cernea M and Mathur H (eds), Can Compensation Prevent Impoverishment: Reforming Resettlement Through Investments and Benefit-Sharing, Oxford University Press, 2008, available at <http://goo.gl/onqDVB> (registration required)
20. *Ibid*
21. Cernea, M, Riesgos de empobrecimiento y reconstrucción : Un modelo para el desplazamiento y la relocalización de poblaciones. In Avá (Journal of Anthropology) N° 5, 2004, published by the Postgraduate Programme in Social Anthropology, Universidad Nacional de Misiones, Argentina
22. Forced Migration Review, Displacement as a consequence of climate change mitigation policies, May 2015, available at <http://goo.gl/YF66IL>
23. UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Oil Palm and Other Commercial Tree Plantations, Monocropping: Impacts on Indigenous Peoples' Land Tenure and Resource Management Systems and Livelihoods, 7 May 2007, available at <http://goo.gl/IKiQC9>
24. IDMC, Global Estimates 2015: People displaced by disasters, section 5, available at <http://goo.gl/BPGCOV>
25. Nansen Initiative, Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change, revised draft, 2 September 2015, paragraph 97
26. UN, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998, available at <http://goo.gl/x3tDmg>
27. List of indicator proposals, 11 August 2015

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