

**First Regional Conference on Internal Displacement in West Africa
Abuja, Nigeria
26 – 28 April 2006**

Hosted by the Government of Nigeria
and co-sponsored by the
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of
Internally Displaced Persons, and the
Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement

Agenda

Wednesday, April 26

9.15 AM REGISTRATION

10:30 AM INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS OF THE HIGH TABLE

10:35AM WELCOMING STATEMENTS

Mrs. Moremi Soyinka – Onijala, Special Assistant to the President,
Migration and Humanitarian Affairs, Nigeria

Colonel Mahamane Toure, Deputy Executive Secretary, Political Affairs,
Defence and Security, Economic Community of West African States
(ECOWAS)

Dr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and Co-Director,
Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement

Ms. Marie-Christine Bocoum, Deputy-Director, Africa Bureau, United
Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**11:00 AM OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN THE ECOWAS
REGION**

Worldwide, there are some 23.7 million internally displaced persons (“IDPs”) as a result of conflict, ethnic strife and communal violence. In the ECOWAS region, internal displacement has been a long-standing problem, with the total number of IDPs as high as several million at the height of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d’Ivoire. Natural disasters, especially drought and food insecurity also result in displacement, as do development projects. Overall, estimates of how many

people are currently internally displaced in West Africa as a result of conflict vary greatly from just over one million to several million. This session will provide an overview of regional displacement trends, with special focus on the different causes of displacement and the particular issues and challenges as well as needs and vulnerabilities that arise for the displaced.

Moderator: Roch Yao Gnabeli, Directeur de la Solidarité et de l'Action Humanitaire, Ministère de la Solidarité et des Victimes de Guerre, Côte d'Ivoire

Presentation

Conflict-induced displacement

Claudia McGoldrick, Senior Country Analyst, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Discussion

12:00 PM **Break**

12:30 PM **NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT**

This session will focus on the normative framework developed for responding to internal displacement -- the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. Developed at the request of the United Nations, the *Principles* are based on international humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as refugee law by analogy. The *Guiding Principles* were recognized by the heads of State and Government at the World Summit in September 2005 as an "important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons". In addition, ECOWAS governments have in various regional fora welcomed the *Guiding Principles* and called for the development of national laws on internal displacement using the *Guiding Principles* as a framework.

This session will examine how states are using the *Guiding Principles* as a reference and a tool, in particular in the development of national laws and policies. It will also explore how regional bodies, international organizations, NGOs and others have been using the *Principles* in addressing situations of displacement.

Moderator: Alhaji S. S. Makarfi, Director, National Emergency Management Agency, Nigeria

Presentations

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the West Africa Context

Walter Kälin, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

Regional Initiatives in Africa on the Guiding Principles

Betsy Greve, Senior Legal Advisor, Africa Bureau, UNHCR

Discussion

1:30 PM Lunch

2.30 PM NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for protecting, assisting and finding durable solutions for internally displaced persons rests first and foremost with national authorities. This session will focus on the national response to internal displacement by examining key steps that national authorities can take to address internal displacement within their borders, whether caused by conflict or natural disaster. Particular attention will be given to initiatives to develop national laws, policies and institutions to address the needs of the internally displaced and to the special role that national human rights commissions can play.

Moderator: Mohamed Lamin Kamara, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sierra Leone

Presentations:

A Framework for National Responsibility

Khalid Koser, Deputy Director, Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement

Developing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement

Dayo Oluyemi-Kusa, Director, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Nigeria

The Experience of Côte d'Ivoire in Addressing Internal Displacement through a National Institution

Roch Yao Gnabeli, Directeur de la Solidarité et de l'Action Humanitaire, Ministère de la Solidarité et des Victimes de Guerre, Côte d'Ivoire

Discussion

4:30 PM *The Role of NGOs and Civil Society*

The Experience of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
Rosina Conteh, Council of Churches in Sierra Leone

A Regional Network: The Experience of WARIPNET
Sadikh Niass, West African Refugees and Internally Displaced
Persons Network (WARIPNET)

Discussion

5:30 PM **Close of session**

7:00 PM **Dinner reception hosted by the Government of Nigeria**

Thursday, April 27

9:00 AM **PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISPLACED**

Persons forced to flee their homes find themselves in urgent need of food, water, shelter, health services, and other necessities, and in many situations require protection and physical safety as well. This session will address issues of humanitarian access and discuss the challenges of protecting and assisting internally displaced persons in the midst of armed conflict, including in border areas and areas under the control of non-state actors, and the role of peacekeepers. In addition, this session will consider these concerns in the context of natural disasters.

Moderator: Coffi Brouz, Coordinateur, Service d'aide et d'assistance au réfugiés et apatrides, Côte d'Ivoire

Presentations

Protecting and Assisting Displaced Populations in Situations of Armed Conflict

Iris Meierhans, Communication Delegate, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Nigeria

The Responsibility of Peacekeepers towards IDPs

Chuma Lwanwa, Training Specialist, United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)

The Experience of the Ugandan National Human Rights Commission in Protecting the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

Nathan Byamukama, Director of Monitoring and Treaties,
Ugandan Human Rights Commission

Protection and assistance for the displaced in situations not of armed conflict

Mohamed Touré, Administrateur des affaires sociales, Réseau Migration Urbanisation en Afrique de l'Ouest (REMUAO)

Discussion

10:30 AM Break

11:00 AM RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES NEEDING SPECIAL ATTENTION

Displacement frequently entails vulnerability to particular risks, especially for women and children, that require special attention. This session will explore how sexual violence and exploitation affect internally displaced persons, both as a consequence and a cause of their displacement. It will also examine the particular protection and reintegration challenges faced by internally displaced children. In addition, it will address the extent to which these particular concerns are being addressed, including in IDP camps as well as urban environments, and identify strategies to improve responses at the national, regional and international levels.

Moderator: Musa Mboob, Director General of Immigration, Gambia

Presentations:

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Exploitation: Prevention and Response

Gloria Bayoh, Publicity, Research and Documentation Manager, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Sierra Leone Chapter

Protection and Reintegration of Internally Displaced Children

Ibrahima Diouf, Special Adviser to Executive Secretary on Child Protection, ECOWAS

IDPs in Urban Environments: Current Challenges

Oscar Mundia, Head of Section, IDP Unit, UNMIL

Discussion

12:30 PM Lunch

2:00 PM TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS: RETURN, RESETTLEMENT AND REINTEGRATION

A “durable solution” for internally displaced persons, the ultimate goal in responding to internal displacement, is found when displaced persons are able to resume stable, secure lives by returning to their places of origin or resettling in another part of their country. This session will focus on conditions for safe and voluntary return or resettlement, including protection for returnees, the elements of reintegration, and alternatives to return. Best practices and lessons learned from experiences in the region will be highlighted as well as the importance of promoting the voices of the internally displaced.

Moderator: Melvin Dennis, Program Officer, Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, Liberia

Presentations:

Experiences from Sierra Leone

Mohamed Lamin Kamara, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sierra Leone

Challenges of Implementing Durable Solutions to Return, Resettlement and Reintegration of Persons Displaced in Nigeria

Conflict-induced displacement

Aisha Laraba Abdullahi, Commissioner for Special Duties, Bauchi State, Nigeria and Abdulrahman Abubakar, Secretary, Plateau United Internally Displaced Persons, Bauchi State Chapter

Natural Disasters

His Excellency Barrister Ibrahim Hassa Hadejia, Deputy Governor of Jigawa State

Reintegration and Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods

Gervais Koffi, Head, Projet Rehabilitation Communautaire, CARE, Côte d’Ivoire

Discussion

3:30 PM **Break**

4:00PM **THE ROLE OF ECOWAS AND THE AFRICAN UNION**

Regional organizations are playing a pivotal role in focusing attention on internal displacement, promoting the *Guiding Principles*, and encouraging collective efforts to find solutions. In this session, the role of ECOWAS will be discussed as well as the experiences of other regional organizations, in particular the African Union.

Moderator: Marie-Thérèse Keita, Senior Human Rights Advisor, United Nations Office for West Africa

Presentations:

The Approach of ECOWAS to Internal Displacement

Olu Arowobusoye, Director, Department of Humanitarian Affairs,
ECOWAS Secretariat

The Role of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in addressing Internal Displacement

Bahame Tom Mukirya Nyanduga, Special Rapporteur on
Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Internally Displaced Persons in
Africa

Discussion

7:00 PM Buffet Dinner

Friday, April 28

9:15 AM THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

International humanitarian, human rights and development organizations can be crucial partners in national and regional efforts, in particular in providing assistance, protection and reintegration support to the internally displaced. This session will explore cooperation with UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and donor governments as part of a regional response.

Moderator: Alsau Sambú, Secrétaire Exécutif, Commission nationale pour les réfugiés

Presentations:

Internal displacement and the International Response

Marc Vincent, Chief, Protection and Policy Section, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), IDP Division

The Response of the UN to Internal Displacement in West Africa

Lisa Fergusson-Nicol, Regional Protection Expert, OCHA

Developments in the African Union towards Greater Protection of IDPs

Daouda Fall, Judge, ECOWAS Community Court of Justice

10:15 AM Break

11:00 AM CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This session will review the major conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, including how protection, assistance, reintegration and development needs of internally displaced persons can be most effectively met in the region and the next steps required to implement the recommendations. A communiqué will be issued on the basis of the recommendations adopted.

Moderated by: Walter Kälin, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

Presentation by Rapporteurs

Megan Bradley and Jessica Wyndham, Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement

Reading of Communiqué

Dayo Oluyemi-Kusa, Director-General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Discussion, adoption of Communiqué

12:30PM CONCLUDING REMARKS

Colonel Mahamane Toure, Deputy Executive Secretary, Political Affairs, Defence and Security, ECOWAS

Ms. Marie-Christine Bocoum, Deputy-Director, Africa Bureau, UNHCR

Dr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and Co-Director, Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement

12:45 PM VOTE OF THANKS

Mrs. Moremi Soyinka – Onijala, Special Assistant to the President, Migration and Humanitarian Affairs, Nigeria

1:00 PM Closing Lunch