



**DEVELOPING DFID'S POLICY APPROACH TO  
REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**

A Research Consultancy by the Refugee Studies Centre  
for the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department,  
Department For International Development -UK

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

Stephen Castles and Nicholas Van Hear

with

Jo Boyden, Jason Hart, Christian Wolff and Paul Ryder

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Queen Elizabeth House  
Department of International Development  
University of Oxford



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. The Study: contents and purpose.** This Report discusses current patterns of forced migration, especially in low and middle-income countries, and examines responses by humanitarian actors, including governments, international agencies and NGOs. The purpose of the study is to provide the Department For International Development - UK (DFID) with an analysis of recent initiatives for change in this field, in order to help the Department refine its policy positions, as well as to help inform thinking in the UK Government as a whole.

**2. Shifts in patterns of forced migration.** The patterns and types of forced migration are constantly shifting. After rising for several decades, refugee and asylum seeker numbers have recently declined. This is partly due to the resolution of some long-running conflicts, but it is also a result of the success of richer states' efforts to contain forced migration in countries or regions of origin. The latter trend is arguably reflected in the rise in numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Another major shift is the increasing significance of complex and protracted displacement, in which large groups of refugees experience long-term exile. These shifts mean that the efforts of development agencies have to be balanced among several different kinds of forced migrant populations: among returning refugees to help consolidate peace and stability in countries emerging from violent conflict; among refugees in poor countries of asylum, particularly where their presence has been protracted; and among IDPs and other war-affected populations in conflict-ridden countries.

**3. The experience of forced migration.** The experience of forced migration can be devastating for individuals, families and communities. It leads to impoverishment, exclusion from social, health and education provisions, and the breakdown of social relationships. However, it is essential to avoid viewing forced migrants as helpless, destitute victims. Often they have only been able to survive through considerable ingenuity and skills. Policies should aim to reinforce such qualities in rebuilding livelihoods and communities. Long-term encampment leads to dependency and hopelessness. While camps are often needed in the early phase of mass refugee movements, they are not long-term solutions, and policies should aim to find other durable solutions. Experiences of forced migration and responses to it are highly diverse. They depend, to a significant degree, on ethnic identity, age, class, gender, and other status attributes. Aid agencies should carry out thorough assessments of vulnerability in specific situations, and tailor their assistance programmes to the differing needs of the various groups.

**4. Conflict, displacement, relief and development.** Conflict and forced migration mainly arise in situations of underdevelopment and poor governance. In turn conflict and forced migration are major obstacles to development. Violence and displacement destroy material resources, stifle human potential, and force large groups of people into poverty, inactivity and dependency. Refugees and IDPs may become a burden to receiving areas, especially if they are not allowed to seek livelihoods. They may even become, or be perceived as, threats to social cohesion and security. Durable solutions, which allow displaced people to return home or to become self-reliant in areas of refuge, are therefore crucial to poverty reduction and development. At the same time, rights-based approaches are bringing about important changes in institutional responses. Implementing such principles means changing the way humanitarian organisations work, transforming organisational cultures and developing new skills.

**5. The international forced migration regime.** The international refugee regime developed in the context of post-1945 displacement and the Cold War. Critics argue that it no longer meets current needs and is in need of reform. Some categories of forced migrant – most notably IDPs – lack adequate legal frameworks and institutional arrangements to provide protection and assistance. Another major problem is coordination of the many organisations involved in complex humanitarian emergencies. The UN has attempted over the last 15 years to improve arrangements for IDPs and to achieve better coordination at both HQ and field levels. Current efforts to develop a ‘collaborative approach’ in these areas should be supported. Also worthy of support is the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative – an attempt to achieve principles of accountability and balance, as well as greater effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness in humanitarian action.

**6. Recent UNHCR initiatives.** In a period of rapid change in forced migration and state responses, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has launched important new initiatives. The Agenda for Protection focuses on measures to improve international protection of refugees and asylum seekers. Convention Plus aims to develop comprehensive plans of action to respond to mass influxes. The Framework for Durable Solutions is perhaps of greatest interest to development agencies: it focuses on the targeting of development assistance, and is concerned with bridging the relief-development gap. It has three components: Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR), Development through Local Integration (DLI) and Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (‘the 4Rs’). The Framework for Durable Solutions involves close cooperation with a range of relief and development actors, both intergovernmental and non-governmental. It is based on the principle of leadership and ownership by governments in the regions of origin. These UNHCR initiatives represent constructive ideas and should be supported.

**7. The EU and forced migration.** Some EU policy initiatives seem driven by political pressures to prevent secondary migration to Europe, while other initiatives seek to build partnerships with poor countries to alleviate pressures on conflict regions. Recent signs of greater understanding between the Justice and Home Affairs, External Relations and Development Directorates-General appear positive. But the volatility of this area is underlined by the recent resurgence of ideas about asylum processing outside the EU. EU ideas for improving access to durable solutions have some potential from a development perspective. As the work programme for these linked proposals is currently being drawn up, there is scope to influence this process in development-friendly directions.

**8. States and forced migration.** Addressing issues raised by forced migration has become an important area of government policy among developed countries and also increasingly among developing countries. A key motivation of several recent initiatives has been the desire to reduce secondary flows of refugees to developed countries. However, there is increasing awareness that border control is insufficient, and that the root causes of conflict and displacement need to be addressed. This underlines the need for whole of government approaches, embracing all the departments concerned with forced migration issues. Government policy itself is closely linked to multilateral approaches involving other states, regional organisations and international agencies.

## **Policy issues and Recommendations**

### ***Addressing the Millennium Development Goals: the links between conflict, forced migration and development***

The countries most affected by conflict and forced migration are amongst the poorest and least developed. At the same time, violence and displacement can block poverty reduction and development plans. Durable solutions, which allow displaced people to return home or to become self-reliant in areas of asylum, are therefore crucial to development in many poorer regions of the world.

#### **Recommendation 1**

DFID should underline the importance of addressing conflict and forced migration for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It should act as an advocate for the inclusion of forced migration issues in development debates. Measures to prevent and resolve conflicts and to address issues arising from forced migration should be an integral part of the overall strategies of the Department, as well as being built into country and regional programming.

#### **Recommendation 2**

DFID should promote a view of refugees and IDPs as active and often highly resourceful survivors of adversity who could, given the right circumstances, make a major positive contribution to host communities. Whilst acknowledging that some forced migrants are rendered very vulnerable by their situation and require proper protection, DFID should take steps to counter the view of forced migrants as dependent, passive victims.

### ***The continuing need for protection***

One of the most immediate needs of refugees and IDPs is protection against violence, persecution and exploitation. DFID should give special attention to supporting people whose rights and needs may be particularly adversely affected in situations of conflict and displacement.

#### **Recommendation 3**

DFID should ensure that its activities take account of protection needs. Strategies to support repatriation or local integration should always be examined to ensure that they do not detract from the imperative of protection. DFID should broaden the understanding of protection to include not only physical security but also the prevention of and protection against extortion, exploitation, abuse and other social protection concerns.

#### **Recommendation 4**

DFID should continue to provide political and financial support to UNHCR in its protection role, and should support protection work by other international actors such as UNHCHR and OCHA through its institutional strategies with such organisations. DFID should also support the protection work of NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). DFID should encourage greater collaboration between agencies to ensure the development of expertise around social protection issues, for example, increasing engagement of UNHCR with UNICEF and Save the Children around the protection of women and children.

### ***Assessing vulnerability and tailoring assistance to specific needs***

Assistance to displaced populations must not just be concerned with survival but also with helping people to preserve and rebuild economic capabilities and social relationships. Policy measures need to be highly responsive to personal and social circumstances.

### **Recommendation 5**

DFID should promote thorough assessment of the vulnerabilities and needs of specific groups (differentiated according to such criteria as gender, generation, age, class and ethnic identity) in forced migration situations. Such assessment should include consultation of the groups concerned, using appropriate participatory methods. This should form the basis for assistance measures tailored to address these differing needs.

### ***Supporting a rights-based approach in humanitarian action***

Increasingly, conflict-affected populations are being perceived not as passive victims but as social actors with a range of fundamental rights enshrined in international law. Rights-based approaches are bringing about important changes in institutional responses to forced migration.

### **Recommendation 6**

DFID should support rights-based approaches in humanitarian action, by building criteria of accountability, advocacy, participation, sustainability and equity/non-discrimination into its own donorship, and advocating these principles in relevant fora.

### ***Engaging with civil society***

An important aspect of recognising conflict-affected populations as social actors is working with the organisations which represent forced migrants and local populations. DFID already has good relations with many such organisations and should build dialogue with them. Establishing partnerships and effective working relationships with such organisations will help deliver policy aimed at lessening the pressure for forced migration and mitigating its effects.

### **Recommendation 7**

DFID should maintain effective mechanisms for engaging with civil society, including NGOs and diaspora organisations, in areas of origin, transit regions and countries hosting refugees.

### ***Acknowledging shifts in patterns of forced migration***

Recent shifts in patterns of forced migration mean that the resources and efforts of development agencies have to be allocated among several different kinds of forced migrant population. It is particularly important to address the growing global crisis of internal displacement and to improve institutional responsibilities and responses in this area. Improved measures to address and resolve protracted refugee situations are also needed.

### **Recommendation 8**

DFID should support UNHCR's role with IDPs and supplement it with support to local and international NGOs and CBOs, when there are gaps in assistance. DFID should build on its support for the Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of IDPs, OCHA's Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division and

the Global IDP Project, and press for the further development of productive collaboration among these bodies within the UN system and beyond. DFID should continue to support promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

### **Recommendation 9**

DFID should press for resolution of protracted and complex displacement, or provide long-term support where resolution is not yet possible.

#### ***Taking the lead and ensuring coherence in policy debates***

DFID has considerable weight among international humanitarian agencies and donor governments and is in a position to exercise more substantial leadership in improving the coordination and quality of humanitarian action. DFID could also play a more significant role in helping to 'join-up' policy at UK and EU levels.

### **Recommendation 10**

DFID should take the lead internationally in working for improved approaches to addressing forced migration issues in the developing world. DFID's political voice, its lobbying power in international fora, and thereby its influence on policy debates should be made commensurate with its strong funding commitment and its strong field presence.

### **Recommendation 11**

At the UK government and EU level, DFID should inject a development perspective into consideration of refugee and asylum policies, showing how policy changes in this area will affect people in poorer developing countries. The department should ensure that measures connected with addressing forced migration and 'migration management' are consistent with long-term development goals.

#### ***Involvement in international policy debates on societies in transition***

Since the 1980s, there has been growing awareness of the gap between relief and development and of the need for better collaboration amongst the various UN agencies and between them and other humanitarian actors to address this problem. Despite the lack of success of earlier efforts, several recent initiatives described in this Report seem very promising, and should be supported by DFID.

### **Recommendation 12**

DFID is well placed to contribute to current international efforts to address the relief-development gap. DFID should support the type of activities envisaged in such recent initiatives as the UN Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance Working Group on Transition Issues (UNDG-ECHA WG TI) and UNHCR's Convention Plus and Framework for Durable Solutions. DFID should work to ensure that such approaches become a part of long-term strategies pursued by relevant international actors.

### **Recommendation 13**

EU ideas for 'Improving Access to Durable Solutions' are worthy of critical DFID support. As the work programme for this initiative is currently being drawn up with a view to starting implementation by the end of 2005, DFID could usefully help to influence this process, lending its weight to further UNHCR's more fully elaborated

## Framework for Durable Solutions.

### *Supporting coordination initiatives in the forced migration field*

Significant efforts have been made in recent years to improve coordination among agencies that deal with forced migration. These efforts include the work of OCHA, measures to make the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) more effective, and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative. Such efforts should be critically supported, with careful monitoring of progress. Comprehensive Plans of Action (CPA) provide an organisational framework for coordinating actions to address forced migration at the regional level. Key principles for CPAs include multilateral participation in planning and implementation; ownership by the government(s) of the country or countries concerned; and participatory approaches to give a voice to displaced populations, host populations and other stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 14**

As a means to build on recent efforts to improve coordination, DFID should critically support the work of OCHA and improvements to the CAP. The Department should continue its support for the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, and work to ensure that its principles and good practices lead to real change at the field and headquarters levels. Taking account of the transnational character of much forced migration, DFID should take full part in both the formulation and the operationalisation of the Comprehensive Plans of Action that are emerging in the Afghan, Somali and other cases. DFID should ensure that CPAs are appropriately connected to funding and development instruments such as CAPs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and are in line with the principles and good practices of GHD.

### *Striking a balance among durable solutions*

Since at least the end of the Cold War, repatriation has been seen as the preferred durable solution for forced migration, somewhat to the neglect of the other two - local integration and resettlement. Recently, however, the potential of the latter two solutions has come to be re-acknowledged by the international community.

### **Recommendation 15**

DFID should support initiatives which balance solutions for forced migrants, always ensuring that these solutions are entirely voluntary and entail full consultation with affected populations. Such an approach is ultimately likely to be more productive in terms of conflict and poverty reduction than more unilateral approaches, such as the pursuit of extra-territorial processing of asylum seekers. Comprehensive Plans of Action, which embody multilateral approaches to balancing durable solutions, have useful potential here.

### *Integrating durable solutions into development planning*

UNHCR's recent Framework for Durable Solutions could make a useful contribution to including forced migrants in development planning, and should be supported. This issue needs to be addressed in different ways in situations of repatriation in post-conflict societies and in situations of integration in host countries.

### **Recommendation 16**

DFID should work with host countries and relevant international institutions to

encourage them to take account of forced migration issues in PRSPs and other planning processes. DFID should support the UNHCR's Framework for Durable Solutions as a means of helping to achieve the MDGs.

***Targeting development assistance for durable solutions: promoting 'additionality'***

As a component of the Framework for Durable Solutions, the targeting of development assistance provides a promising approach for both refugee-hosting areas and in settings of return and reconstruction. All forms of targeted development assistance in refugee or returnee contexts require the engagement of the refugees, returnees and host communities themselves. However, such aid should be clearly perceived by donors and recipients as additional to existing development aid. The principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, including standard setting, good practice and means of accountability, should be drawn upon here.

**Recommendation 17**

UNHCR's approach to targeting development assistance for durable solutions should be supported by DFID. Guided by the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, DFID should press for 'additionality' of aid to address forced migration both on principle and to allay fears of host countries that aid for refugees will be siphoned off from general aid budgets.

***Targeting development assistance in conditions of return and reconstruction***

Under the rubric of the '4Rs' (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) within Convention Plus, targeting development assistance for return is the least controversial for intervention, since the governments involved are usually receptive to assistance with repatriation and reconstruction. However, potential tensions have to be carefully managed if renewed violence is to be avoided. Repatriation is only valuable for conflict resolution, peace building and ultimately poverty reduction if it is sustainable. Continuing assistance after repatriation to countries and communities that have hosted refugees, often for long periods, needs to be part of the overall package.

**Recommendation 18**

DFID should ensure that refugee repatriation is voluntary and based on accurate and honest information of the situation back home, not least because information is often difficult to come by in exile. Assessment of the scale of returns that a given country or region can absorb and tailoring repatriation accordingly will increase the likelihood that repatriation and reconstruction are durable.

**Recommendation 19**

Planning for repatriation should be a central part of development planning in conflict-affected countries. DFID and other development actors should seek to involve local authorities and local actors and refugees themselves in the planning and implementation of return programmes. To support repatriation, planning in countries of origin should pay full attention to the preconditions for successful return and reintegration of both refugees and IDPs, including local and regional post-conflict reconstruction programmes, rehabilitation of former combatants, and income generation programmes in support of returnees and ex-combatants.

### ***Targeting development assistance in countries of first asylum***

Assistance for refugees in countries of first asylum is a sensitive issue for the governments and publics of such countries as it touches on the use of resources for people who are not nationals, but who are often located amid nationals who are themselves poor. Consequently the most promising approaches are those directed at refugee-hosting areas, which include both refugees and the local communities. An important principle is that refugee populations should be encouraged to become self-reliant. This implies imaginative use of micro-finance, training and small enterprise development schemes.

#### **Recommendation 20**

DFID should support local integration of both camp dwellers and self-settled refugees by engaging with host states to consider the best ways to accomplish this, by targeting development assistance to refugee-populated areas, by supporting the rehabilitation of former refugee camps and settlements for productive use, and by supporting self-sufficiency and livelihood and enterprise development initiatives for locally-integrated refugees. Such initiatives should recognise the needs of host populations as well as those of displaced groups.

### ***Resettlement***

It is increasingly acknowledged that resettlement programmes must be part of the package of durable solutions. This is because the options of repatriation or local integration are not available to certain refugee groups – often residual groups which have experienced long-term exile and encampment.

#### **Recommendation 21**

To support third-country resettlement as part of comprehensive packages for the resolution of forced migration, DFID should advocate the consolidation and expansion of the UK's fledgling refugee resettlement programme in the name of responsibility sharing.

### ***Taking account of transnational and translocal arenas***

The dispersal of households among several different sites – internal displacement within the homeland; flight to neighbouring countries of first asylum; and flight or resettlement to countries outside the region of conflict – needs to be considered in development interventions. Livelihood strategies of such dispersed or transnational households often span several locations: they may involve remittances, movement across borders to farm, work or run businesses and the establishment of cross-border trading networks.

#### **Recommendation 22**

DFID should take account of forced migrants' transnational strategies and build them into their interventions. DFID interventions should complement and not compete with refugees own livelihood strategies and options, which stretch beyond refugee camps and settlements. DFID should support further investigation of the significance of remittances among displaced and other vulnerable conflict-affected populations so as to help design policies to maximise their positive impacts for livelihoods.

### ***Supporting livelihoods among forced migrants***

Support for forced migrants' livelihoods is needed whatever their circumstances: in camps or self-settled in countries of first asylum; during internal displacement; in the context of return; and in states of transition when families may be dispersed among several different locations. Refugees and IDPs who have been able to lead a productive life, receive an education, develop skills and accumulate resources are better prepared to integrate themselves or return home than those who have been confined for long periods in camps or who eke out an existence on the margins of society.

#### **Recommendation 23**

DFID should actively support efforts to achieve self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for internally displaced populations and refugees, and, wherever possible, work to avoid long-term encampment, in which forced migrants are dependent on care and maintenance programmes. Livelihood support projects should be based on strong situation and market analysis so as to achieve sustainability, avoid adverse impacts on the local political economy, and avoid the development of exploitative employment or commercial relationships. DFID should engage actively with governments and local authorities concerned for the promotion of refugee and IDP self-reliance, integration or reintegration.

#### **Recommendation 24**

DFID should support refugee and IDP education and vocational and life skills training in camps and settlements, both to help forced migrants to improve their living conditions in the areas of their displacement and to prepare them for reintegration on return.

### ***Reconciling security concerns with forced migration and development***

Security concerns arise through forced migration. Judicious development assistance can foster greater security and protection for refugees and the local population, and can contribute to the alleviation of poverty in refugee-hosting areas and to broader national development objectives. Promoting good governance and the rule of law can help to short circuit anti-refugee sentiments and grievance-driven insecurity. Security concerns can also accompany return and reconstruction. DFID's extensive experience in many of these areas, and in particular the emergence of cross-departmental initiatives such as the Conflict Prevention Pools and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit, makes it well placed to contribute here.

#### **Recommendation 25**

DFID's programmes in host countries should include consideration of how assistance to refugee-populated areas can alleviate local feelings of grievance towards refugee populations, thereby fostering greater local security and well-being. Programmes should be designed so as to realise a double benefit: fostering an environment of greater security and protection for refugees and the local population, while also contributing to broader national development objectives and the alleviation of poverty in refugee-hosting communities.

#### **Recommendation 26**

DFID should ensure that Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration interventions for ex-combatants are compatible with efforts to reintegrate returning refugees and IDPs.