

ReDSS brief– CRRF process

Supporting Refugees and Host Communities in East Africa

About ReDSS

The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) is a collation of 12 NGOs that are working together in the search of durable solutions for displacement affected communities in East and Horn of Africa.

The Secretariat that started at the end of 2015 is not an implementing agency but a coordination and information hub acting as a catalyst and agent provocateur to stimulate forward thinking and policy development on durable solutions. It seeks to improve joint learning and research, support advocacy and policy development, capacity building and coordination.

Displacement context in East Africa

Displacement in Eastern Africa is predominantly of a protracted nature. At the end of May 2017, there were almost 13 million people displaced in the region- with 4 million refugees mostly from South Sudan and Somalia, and at least half are children. More than one million children have fled escalating violence in South Sudan, so almost one in five children.

The vast majority of refugees have been hosted in neighbouring countries for decades. Uganda for instance is currently hosting 1.2 million refugees making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.

Uganda has welcomed more refugees in the last month of 2016 than the total number of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean into Europe in the entire year.

Challenges and opportunities to address displacement and Solutions under CRRF processes

Although most have been displaced for several years or even decades, few have durable solutions prospects such as returning to their home, being integrated into their host communities or settle elsewhere.

We have a collective responsibility to challenge our structures and systems to do more and better together in the search for durable solutions for displacement affected communities in the region.

This is why the CRRF processes in the region are critical to ensure that we address displacement and solutions differently. This change requires political resolve, long-term investments and a multi-sectorial rights and needs based programming approach to work towards prevention and solutions to reduce displacement levels.

The CRRF pilot processes must go beyond ‘business as usual’ with key stakeholders involved in order to test and refine new ways of working.

We, ReDSS members, commit to work together and to be collectively held accountable for the implementation of our commitments as stipulated below.

It is our hoped that such an approach, developed in the spirit of the New York Declaration, will support countries and communities that host refugees in improving asylum space, integrated access to services, inclusive economic opportunities and infrastructure for all.

The CRRF process also provides a key opportunity to call on the international community to demonstrate solidarity with Africa member states through responsibility sharing and increased resettlement quotas for refugees.

ReDSS commitments to support comprehensive refugee responses

1. Support the integration of displacement and durable solutions in national development plans and in peace negotiations and agreement

Political will and longer term investment from development actors are critical in support of comprehensive refugee response for displacement affected communities in East Africa. It is key to complement humanitarian action, which is still essential in many places in Eastern Africa, with developmental approaches aimed at

integrating marginalized displacement affected communities into development planning, programming and implementation with a view to make them self-sufficient.

The inclusion of displacement and durable solutions into national development programming namely by including refugees and returnees in key sectors such as health, education, and good governance, is of critical importance.

2. Develop Comprehensive Refugee Framework to support joint accountability and analysis (such as the IGAD Plan of Action on Somali Refugees)

A comprehensive refugee response requires a multi-stakeholder and sectoral, rights and needs based programming approach. Addressing physical, material and legal safety of displaced people as a whole is critical and requires contributions from all sectors.

Therefore the process must be viewed as a collective action rather than mandate driven based on an inclusive, participatory and consensus building approach - our common goal being to give the millions of displaced persons a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.

It is critical to improve the generation and availability of relevant data and analysis to better understand and operationalize complementary humanitarian and developmental approaches and to mitigate against secondary displacements.

This requires to adopt comprehensive national and regional CRRF framework with common outcomes to support joint accountability and analysis and to improve data and knowledge management on displacement in the region.

This is what IGAD Nairobi Plan of Action is a good step in that direction that should be expanded to the South Sudanese refugee crisis. Similarly, the Somalia Durable Solution Initiative, is a good example where humanitarian and development actors are coming together under the leadership of the government and of the UN Resident Coordinator, developing joint Solution analyses to inform areas based action plan.

3. Strengthen self-reliance through freedom of movement and right to work – and integrated programing for both displaced and host communities - away from care and maintenance approach and involving the private sector

Given the unlikelihood of return or resettlement in the early stages of displacement and the number of protracted refugee crises in the region, early solutions is key to promote, support and facilitate a comprehensive refugee response in the early stages of displacement.

A comprehensive refugee response approach must inevitably have a primary focus on building refugee self-reliance and resilience in the country of asylum. And this cannot be achieved without refugees having the right to work and freedom of movement.

CRRF planning should therefore place a focus on increasing self-reliance and integrated programing for both displaced and host communities, factoring in appropriate economic, environmental and social considerations.

Equally important, involving development actors involved from the start of displacement is a key opportunity to complement humanitarian interventions by bringing development specialists to support the collective effort and inform medium to longer term planning, creating the space required to plan for comprehensive refugee response

Development partners should adapt to new approaches and deliver on the agreed Grand Bargain commitments, including the provision of predictable, multi-year and multi sectors financing such as the EU Trust Fund and RDPP in order to enable the required long-term development solutions to the current displacement crises, possibly through joint funding mechanisms such as a multi-donor trust fund.

Assistance should be grounded in the principles of delivering through local and national responders and in a participatory manner, ensuring that refugees and host communities are included in making the decisions that affect their lives.

4. Foster localized approaches and better engage local actors and communities to ensure ownership, local relevance and social cohesion

It is essential for comprehensive refugee response to adopt a 'displacement affected communities' approach-inclusive of refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities – and to place our accountability to displaced populations at the centre of our action to ensure ownership, local relevance and social cohesion.

We must therefore collectively invest into capacities to sustain solutions locally and nationally. Such investments will strengthen national institutions and partnerships that can sustain locally owned solutions.

Points to inform plenary discussion questions

How can we support new ways of working and ensure closer collaboration with the private sector?

A comprehensive refugee response won't involve a one-size-fits-all solution, it must be a multi-stakeholder approach recognizing and leveraging the unique insights and contributions of all actors and private sector solutions are an essential component.

Leveraging the expertise of different actors should be the basis for strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus focusing on comparative advantages within a common framework to work under at country level.

The ongoing mapping exercises in the various pilot countries are critical, but it is critical to coordinate them and to agree on common criteria and methodology – which is not the case as of now. So the mapping in Tanzania, Ethiopia and at regional level are all using very different approaches without a common understanding on which information to collect, how it will be used and to inform what. Same issue for the survey on good practices that lacks of criteria and common understanding of good practices.

IGAD roadmap is a great example of an application of the CRRF process at regional level that would be extremely useful for the South Sudanese refugee crisis too. The regional value added in addressing Somali refugee situation is key and well addressed in the IGAD roadmap.

ReDSS committed to conduct Solution analysis in each country focusing on one of the national pledge / commitment to inform and contribute to CRRF discussion by providing joint analysis to inform better programming.

- **In Ethiopia**, ReDSS is about to start a solutions analysis to assess the extent to which local integration has been achieved for refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for 20 years or more.
- **In Tanzania**, ReDSS is finalizing a Solutions Analysis that assesses the extent to which local integration for 1972 Burundi caseload has been achieved.
- **In Somalia**, ReDSS has developed under the leadership of the government and of the UN Resident Coordinator joint Solution analyses to inform areas based action plan in areas of return.

Furthermore, ReDSS is conducting displacement and durable solutions training including a session on the CRRF process, bringing together humanitarian and development actors, donors, governments, national and international NGOs to build a common understanding on displacement.

We also organised learning event in partnership with key stakeholders, like the Rift Valley Institute in Nairobi or last week in Kampala bringing together government, development, humanitarian and private sector stakeholders to discuss displacement and solutions in the context of the CRRF and ahead of the Solidarity Summit.

How do we ensure genuine inclusiveness in the CRRF process to achieve a “whole of society” approach?

Each pilot country or situation should have a CRRF secretariat led by government and RC Office, with representative from UN, national and international NGOs, humanitarian and development donors, private sector and academia.

A CRRF secretariat for the Somali situation also needs to be created under the leadership of IGAD and UNHCR Special Envoy Ambassador Affey. This will be critical to support a more inclusive approach but also to clarify the focus within Somalia versus at regional level as for now there are still quite a lot of confusion on the focus and purpose of the CRRF Somali situation.

It is critical to balance short-term objectives/ quick wins due to the very short CRRF timeframe with medium to long-term strategies and inclusive engagement. In order to do so, developing joint framework at country level is essential to ensure that all partners can contribute into a coordinated manner.

Organising CRRF workshops like in Uganda or Tanzania is a very good way to ensure engagement of stakeholders beyond the usual ones.

ReDSS has created a CRRF working group with the objective to ensure coherence and consistent engagement at national and regional level feeding in the global coordination. It is open to both ReDSS and non-ReDSS members to maximise engagement and participation from any interested NGOs and INGOs in the region.

How can we bring displacement affected communities voices and perspectives into the CRRF process?

ReDSS is committed to bring displacement affected communities voices and perspectives into the CRRF process and this was identified as our key priority.

The title of the CRRF may sound a bit misleading – as it gives the impression that it is refugee centric, but the inclusion of host communities is central to the whole framework.

It is critical to support the safe and meaningful involvement of displacement affected communities in decisions that affect their own lives, so as to ensure their ownership and support in order to make solutions lasting and locally relevant.

Support the inclusion and increased engagement of local NGOs, Community based organizations and faith based organizations (and cultural leaders) in order to enhance a better understanding of the main concerns and issues faced by host communities and to adopt a displacement affected community' lens inclusive of refugees and host communities.

How to support Members States engagement and leadership in the CRRF process?

The Global Compact on Refugees should be written in a way to inspire Member State action and provide a clear road map in fulfilling their responsibility to a better response to protracted refugee situations.

At country level, National, regional and local authorities have the primary responsibility and they need to be supported to be able to play a leadership and coordinating role. It is essential to strengthen their capacity and to support the integration of protracted displacement and durable solutions in national development plans and in peace negotiations and agreements.

It is essential to involve National Planning authority and line ministries to build in National Development Plan and systems – so to go beyond National Refugee Agencies.

ReDSS is working closely with IGAD for instance, providing them with technical support and expertise for the development of the roadmap. Equally, ReDSS partners are working closely with governments at country level to support solutions and displacement processes.

The Somalia Durable Solution Initiative is a good example where humanitarian and development actors came together under the leadership of the government and the UN Resident Coordinator, developing joint Solution analyses to inform areas based action plan.

ReDSS members call on the international community to provide adequate long-term and predictable political and financial support to countries and communities that host displaced populations, in such ways that improve protection, inclusive access to services, economic opportunities and infrastructure for all.