This updated Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) Regional Policy Strategy has been developed to guide the ReDSS’ collective engagement to address forced displacement in the Horn of Africa region. It is an update to ReDSS previous Agenda for Humanity and SDGs (2016) and serves as a more comprehensive reference to our overall joint regional policy strategy (2021 – 2023) that will inform collective annual work plans at regional and country level in the years to come.

The ReDSS Regional Policy Strategy is in three parts:

- **Overall Regional Policy Strategy**
  which outlines our key commitments and common actions across four key durable solutions challenges to find and sustain solutions to address forced displacement in our region.

- **Operationalising the Strategy**
  which outlines ReDSS approaches to policy engagement, key achievements and learning, and critical success factors in the implementation of the joint regional strategy.

- **Regional Policy Strategy intervention logic**
  which connects the implementation of Strategy to the ReDSS overall policy logframe.
Forced displacement context

The search for durable solutions to the protracted displacement situation in the Horn of Africa is a key humanitarian and development concern. This is a regional and cross-border issue, with a strong political dimension, which demands a multi-stakeholder and sector response that goes beyond the humanitarian agenda.

Driven by a combination of conflict and climatic shocks, and underpinned by poor governance and poverty, displacement in the Horn of Africa region is consistently high, protracted, and dynamic. The region currently hosts more than 11.8 million people who are displaced. This includes 3.9 million refugees and 7.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The majority of the displaced in our region continue to live in protracted displacement and for many durable solutions prospects such as returning to their home, being integrated into their host communities or settling elsewhere are out of reach. This is placing an extraordinary burden on host countries and communities. Comprehensively addressing long-term displacement needs and solutions issues is compounded by continued new displacement caused by outbreaks of conflict and violence and cyclical natural disasters (including in recent years, drought and flooding) and in 2020 new emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic and its profound impact on already vulnerable displacement-affected communities.

Over the past few years, responses to forced displacement have gradually shifted in many countries in the region. The international community including humanitarian and development organisations and donors has recognised the need to transition from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term durable solutions programming, acknowledging that displacement is a political and development challenge requiring long-term investment that complements the humanitarian response. While many gains have been made in the broader durable solutions agenda, in 2020 RedSS identified five key issues linked to durable solutions to continue to focus on: (1) political dynamics and IDPs: how to maintain a principled response; (2) protection at risk in development programming; (3) urban displacement, housing and forced evictions; (4) displacement financing architecture; and (5) measuring return (re)integration and self-reliance processes.
Regional Policy Strategy

Despite significant progress, learning and good practice at local, national and regional levels, in 2020 there remain key challenges to advance the durable solutions agenda and support solutions for displacement-affected communities in our region. These include:

- How to look at the displacement situation post Global Refugee Forum (GRF) inclusive of refugees, IDPs and host communities?
- How to develop common approaches to measuring return, (re)integration and self-reliance processes?
- How to rethink the displacement financing architecture and the types of financing models required to fund sustainable solutions to displacement?
- How various actors can work together to ensure the new Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Support Platform sustains momentum and delivers on the various regional declarations through a multi-stakeholder approach and support more constructive cross-country learning and collaboration?

The durable solutions agenda continues to require multi-stakeholder engagement to support effective humanitarian-development-peacebuilding coordination to prevent displacement and find and sustain solutions to protracted displacement. It requires continued political resolve, long-term investments and a sectorial, rights and needs-based programming approach to work towards prevention and solutions to reduce displacement levels in the region.

In support of advancing multi-stakeholder engagement to find and sustain solutions RedSS members commit to work together and to be collectively held accountable for the implementation of our joint agenda. Our broad commitments based on the key challenges to addressing forced displacement will guide our work while the actions will inform the development of the next ReDSS Strategy (2021 – 2023) and work plan for the years to come. It is one vision implemented by ReDSS members through joint learning and collective outcomes.

Commitments

1. **Area-based:** Invest at sub-national levels in supporting Durable Solutions Working Groups/local solutions hubs bringing together humanitarian, development and peace building actors to support stronger engagement, participation and accountability with displacement-affected communities and locally led processes linking durable solutions programming to district development plans.

2. **Measuring outcomes:** Develop multi-stakeholder approaches to measure durable solutions processes in each country and support greater accountability amongst all stakeholders contributing to collective outcomes.

3. **Displacement financing:** Work with all stakeholders to rethink the displacement financing architecture to support both early and long-term durable solutions processes benefiting both displaced and host communities.

4. **Regional and cross-country:** Work with IGAD and other key stakeholders to support the Regional Support Platform to assist countries’ capacity to address and find solutions to displacement and foster cross learning and collaboration.

Five key issues linked to durable solutions to continue to focus on:

1. Political dynamics and IDPs: how to maintain a principled response.
2. Protection at risk in development programming.
3. Urban displacement, housing and forced evictions.
4. Displacement financing architecture.

Cover photo: Banbusul IDP settlement in the outskirts of Baidoa, Somalia. Credit: DRC

1. The Horn of Africa region consists of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.
2. United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) data (tabulation of all refugees and IDPs in Horn of Africa countries). See UNHCR reporting (accessed 9 July 2020).
3. The core commitments are also aligned to the ReDSS GRF Pledge.
Commitment 1

Area-based: Invest at sub-national levels in supporting Durable Solutions Working Groups/local solutions hubs bringing together humanitarian, development and peace building actors to support stronger engagement, participation and accountability with displacement-affected communities and locally led processes, linking durable solutions programming to district development plans

- Developing area-based solutions approaches is paramount to ensure integrated and comprehensive programming for displaced and host populations. Emerging learning shows that an effective area-based approach is dependent on ensuring complementarity and coordination with other actors and programmes also operating in its area of implementation. It is important to understand the planning and interventions that already exist in an area in order to identify the gaps and opportunities that can be capitalised upon. This is why it is essential to link programming to local and district development plans.

- National and local authorities have the primary responsibility and need to be supported to play their coordination and leadership role. There is a need to invest in longer term, sustainable and locally appropriate capacity building, going beyond secondments to support institution building and accompaniment. There is also a need to balance investments and engagements carefully between local/municipal and federal level, both in terms of programming, secondments/capacity injections and policy/legislation support.

- The establishment of local durable solutions coordination groups, in particular at municipal levels, has encouraged increased multi-stakeholder coordination, whole-of-government involvement and ownership of the process. These working groups are playing an important role in shifting responses from clusters/sectors to multi-stakeholder coordination that brings together development, humanitarian, resilience, and state building actors under the leadership of local authorities.

- Community engagement, leadership and participation is critical to inform (re)integration analysis and programming to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and to adopt a ‘displacement-affected communities’ approach inclusive of refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities. Protection and social cohesion should form core elements to durable solutions approaches and are a foundation to work on sustainable (re)integration.
An area-based approach is also essential to both efforts to **prevent displacement and ensure early solutions approaches and responding to new emergencies through a dual focus** that addressing humanitarian needs whilst maintaining a focus on long-term displacement and solutions issues informed by learning and evidence.

**Key actions:**

- Continue to engage in and actively support Durable Solutions Working Groups/local solutions hubs to address the needs of displacement-affected communities and strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination with municipal and district structures and support better linkages between national and local-level processes.

- Working with local authorities at sub national levels to coordinate and lead joint and inclusive planning. Invest in long-term joint capacity development strategies including the provision of more mentorship and peer learning to support local actors and authorities.

- Supporting participatory and inclusive processes that ensure meaningful engagement, leadership and participation of displacement-affected communities including the use of Community Action Plans (CAPs) that bring displacement-affected community voices into planning processes, and inform policy and programming. It also includes the use of aspirations surveys to better understand and use analysis to inform durable solutions programming and promoting leadership and innovation in engaging and creating mutual accountability with displacement-affected communities.

- Ensuring that new emergencies and displacement are responded to through a solutions lens that encompasses early solutions and solutions mainstreaming approaches to respond to humanitarian needs whilst maintaining a dual focus to address long-term displacement and solutions issues.
Commitment 2

Measuring outcomes: Develop multi-stakeholder approaches to measure durable solutions processes in each country and support greater accountability amongst all stakeholders contributing to collective outcomes.

- It is critical to improve the generation and availability of relevant data and analysis to better understand and operationalise complementary humanitarian and development approaches to durable solutions. There is limited disaggregated data suitable for long-term solutions planning and to support solutions mainstreaming. However, data alone is not useful. It needs to be used to inform collective analysis and a common vision.

- The lack of evidence and lack of consensus among actors on how to measure progress related to durable solutions processes, remain as key challenges. In particular, different actors still use different measurement tools. (Re)integration is a highly difficult concept to measure, given it is contextual, includes multiple dimensions such as economic, social and psychological elements and is partly based on subjective perceptions of different groups such as returnees, IDPs and hosts. For indicators to be useful they need to look at both pathways and thresholds towards (re)integration.

- It remains critical for humanitarian and development partners to come together to discuss and work on common standards to measure and monitor progress towards sustainable (re)integration. This should be done both at the programmatic level but across regional and national levels including by linking to wider discussions around the poverty agenda and better aligning and indicating durable solutions programming contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key actions:

- Working with ReDSS members including across different Durable Solutions consortia in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya to support development of common indicators framework and through engaging with technical external partners (Refugee Self-Reliance Index, graduation approaches etc)

- Supporting greater coordination on data, research and knowledge management to avoid duplication and promoting a common approach and understanding through development of common research agendas and joint analysis of studies and supporting ReDSS members to share learning on different approaches to measuring durable solutions processes

- Aligning and indicating durable solutions programming to national development plans including contribution to the poverty agenda and SDGs.
A settlement in Somalia. Credit: Marco Gusazzini
The case of the Horn of Africa region remains a complex one, and requires engagement and coordination between humanitarian, development, peace building (the so-called ‘triple nexus’) and private sector actors to support refugees, IDPs, host communities and hosting countries. As the numbers of displaced people continue to grow and the protracted nature of their displacement mostly further entrenched, humanitarian financing needs to be complemented by different types of development funding and other types of innovative and alternative financing to be able to sustainably respond to displacement challenges and needs.

At the heart of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is the call for increased ‘responsibility-sharing’ with the aim to ease pressure on countries that welcome and host refugees. And yet the GCR does not contain a mechanism to ensure additional or more predictable funding including for hosting governments. While a large number of pledges including financial were made at the first GRF in December 2019, it remains to be seen whether host governments in the region will receive a proportional increase and more sustainable funding to support their responses to refugees and host communities, including direct budget support and financing to their national development and sector response plans inclusive of displaced populations.

The notable exception to this financial picture is the World Bank Group (WBG) International Development Assistance (IDA) 18/19 host community and refugee windows made available to refugee-hosting countries, intended to ease the burden. While WBG financing is important, it will never address ongoing humanitarian needs or fully finance the transition towards nationally led refugee responses as envisioned in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Importantly, easing the pressure on refugee-hosting countries must go beyond financial incentives. Increased third-country resettlement must play a more central role.
Key actions:

- Continued engagement with key donors around the need for multi-year development funding to address long-term displacement and solutions issues. The need for flexible funding that allows partner to adjust programmes to meet new emergency needs through early solutions approaches whilst maintaining a dual focus on durable solutions.

- Engaging with the WBG, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), national governments and development donors to map and support joint analysis of current financing models, country specific case studies and operational recommendations for financing modalities in key sectors.

- Continued support to multi-stakeholder donor coordination around a common vision and approaches to durable solutions through monthly Durable Solutions Working Groups with donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN).

Women carrying jerry cans in Somali Regional State, Credit: Poonwai Nang, Oxfam Hongkong

Top photo caption: A shopping centre in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Credit: DRC
Commitment 4

Regional and cross-country: Work with IGAD and other key stakeholders to support the Regional Support Platform to assist countries’ capacity to address and find solutions to displacement and foster cross learning and collaboration.

- In December 2019 at the GRF governments, regional authorities (IGAD), humanitarian and development partners and donors made a number of commitments to advance the refugee agenda in the Horn of Africa and in refugee hosting countries. These commitments create opportunities for continued multi-stakeholder engagement but they need to be operationalised and mutual accountability to turn the pledges into action. IGAD can continue to play an important role through the new GCR Regional Support Platform both through its regional policy processes and its convening power with member states. This includes both a focus on regional policy processes including Nairobi, Djibouti and Kampala declarations and supporting the operationalising of pledges and commitments made at the GRF by national governments and partners.

- In countries where there are political or institutional blockages to GRF implementation, focus on local level piloting of what works and documenting learning and impact. Focus on incremental changes in some areas such as socio-economic (re)integration while continuing to advocate for better understanding of all dimensions of (re)integration, including the social/psychological and social cohesion elements.

- Despite the context-specific nature of forced displacement and durable solutions agenda, cross-country learning for both authorities and practitioners can play a key role in supporting dialogue on how to address durable solutions for displacement-affected communities. Somalia, for example, has a lot of learning in relation to durable solutions approaches (including core programming principles) that can assist other countries such as Ethiopia and South Sudan where solutions programming is in the early stages.
Key actions:

- Continue to engage with IGAD to support the new Regional Support Platform and facilitate membership engagement. Continue to share learning and evidence in relation to the post GRF agenda to inform regional policy processes.

- Aligning research questions to policy priorities to ensure relevance and use of political economy analysis to better and more granular understanding of the opportunities, incentive structures etc for policy influence.

- Leverage and create strategic opportunities for cross-country learning between national and local authorities and practitioners.
The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) is a coordination and information hub that acts to catalyse forward thinking and policy development on durable solutions for displacement. ReDSS seeks to improve joint learning and programming, inform policy processes, enhance capacity development and facilitate coordination in the collective search for durable solutions. It is comprised of 14 organisations working together to maintain focused momentum and stakeholder engagement towards durable solutions for displacement-affected communities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.