

ACTION AGENDA EXPLAINER

OVERVIEW OF ACTION AGENDA

Each year, conflict, disasters, and other shocks displace more people from their homes. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has more than doubled [since 2013](#) and is projected to increase steadily over the coming years. As of the end of 2022, a record [71.1 million](#) people were internally displaced.

National governments have the primary responsibility to assist and protect IDPs within their territories as citizens and residents of their countries. In practice, governments often require assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and donors. The [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#) are an important framework to prevent, assist, and provide solutions to internal displacement in line with international law.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been raising global awareness on internal displacement, highlighting the need for IDPs to reintegrate into society through access to national safety nets, the labor market, and regular housing. Guterres has also outlined [commitments for U.N. agencies](#) and other actors to help prevent and respond to internal displacement.

In 2019, Secretary-General Guterres established the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP) and tasked it with providing recommendations on how to better deal with internal displacement, with a focus on solutions. The HLP submitted its official [report](#) in September 2021. To further the work of the panel, Secretary-General Guterres released the [Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#) in June 2022 with three main goals:

1. Help IDPs find a **durable solution** to their displacement.
2. Better **prevent new displacement** crises from emerging.
3. Ensure those facing displacement receive effective **protection and assistance**.

THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

As per the Action Agenda, Secretary-General Guterres also appointed U.N. Assistant-Secretary-General [Robert Piper](#) in June 2022 as his Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to oversee the Action Agenda implementation. The Special Adviser has a two-year mandate to raise the profile of internal displacement as a global crisis and to facilitate development-oriented solutions at the country level in coordination with national governments, civil society, and other stakeholders. He is supported by the Office of the Special Adviser, which provides technical advice and coordinates communications and advocacy. The Office is part of the U.N. Secretariat.

ACTION AGENDA COMMITMENTS

The Action Agenda includes 31 U.N. commitments to prevent further internal displacement, improve responses, and enable solutions. The Office of the Special Adviser has grouped these commitments to

organize U.N.-led working groups around implementation and has invited NGOs to participate in the groups. Some [ICVA](#) and [InterAction](#) Members now participate in groups 1, 6, and 11 (see Annex I).

- Group 1 focuses on solutions strategies and whole-of-society approaches.
- Group 6 on the need for collaboration and coherence in the data ecosystem.
- Group 11 on accountability to displaced persons, protection, and assistance, including the [IASC Independent Review of Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement](#) and engagement with local civil society.

The conveners of Groups 10 and 11 have decided to hold joint meetings to capitalize on their similar focus. Group 10 focuses on advocacy-related commitments for better protection and assistance of IDPs. As these commitment groupings carry out their work, there may be further reorganizations to promote coherence and effectiveness.

Group conveners reach out biannually to their participants—initially in May 2023—to receive updates on interim progress and determine possible gaps. Each convener is responsible for providing updates to Special Adviser Piper. The Special Adviser briefs Secretary-General Guterres and informs NGOs via quarterly briefings. The InterAction and ICVA members who take part in groupings also update InterAction and ICVA, who compile and share updates with their networks.

THE STEERING GROUP ON SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The Special Adviser also chairs a dedicated Steering Group composed of eight U.N. agencies: [DCO](#), [UNHCR](#), [UNDP](#), [OCHA](#), [IOM](#), [DPPA](#), [DPO](#), and [UNICEF](#); the [World Bank](#) is an observer. Its mandate is to work at the global and country level to drive collective U.N. action. Special Adviser Piper briefs InterAction and ICVA members on the work of the Steering Group during quarterly meetings.

INTERAGENCY ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement also oversees a Communications and Advocacy Working Group to strategize ways to increase visibility on internal displacement and the Action Agenda. The group, which meets roughly once per month, is co-chaired by UNICEF and the Office of the Special Adviser and is comprised of NGO representatives and focal points from Steering Group agencies. Participating NGOs include the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), and Refugees International. The group works on common advocacy around achieving the objectives of the Action Agenda and is developing a collective communication strategy to highlight progress.

HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

The Action Agenda is expected to conclude in December 2024 with a high-level event. The goals of the event are to transition from the Action Agenda to a sustainable system that will continue to uphold its tenets and make progress in preventing and reducing internal displacement globally. Advanced planning for

the event has not yet begun, and ICVA and InterAction will liaise with the Office of the Special Adviser to map out opportunities tied to the event for NGOs.

THE ACTION AGENDA IN PRACTICE

ACTION AGENDA PILOT COUNTRIES

The Office of the Special Adviser has identified 16 pilot countries where U.N. Resident Coordinators/U.N. Country Teams are working with national Governments and partners, including civil society, to set up strategies, coordination, and financing frameworks to support at least 10 million IDPs. The 16 countries include Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Vanuatu, and Yemen. There has been early progress toward the creation of these frameworks in Iraq, Columbia, Somalia, and Ethiopia.

COUNTRY VISITS

Special Adviser Piper and his team are visiting pilot countries to meet with high-level government officials and U.N. Humanitarian Country Team leadership, as well as international organizations and NGOs. Visits are arranged on a relatively short timeline in coordination with the respective resident coordinator and are planned based on each country's situation. Visits by Special Adviser Piper are targeted at a high level to build political will within national governments. Visits by his team may include some government officials and are used to gauge where support or expertise is needed to advance progress. The Office of the Special Adviser keeps InterAction and ICVA informed of upcoming visits, and Mr. Piper briefs ICVA and InterAction Members on these visits during quarterly meetings. By June 2023, the Special Adviser and his team have visited Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, [Somalia](#), and [South Sudan](#).

THE ACTION AGENDA IN CONTEXT

U.N. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Per the Action Agenda, the Special Adviser works closely with Paula Gaviria Betancur, the [U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons \(S.R.\)](#). Ms. Gaviria's mandate includes "mainstreaming the human rights of the internally displaced into all relevant parts of the United Nations system," strengthening the international response to internal displacement, coordinating advocacy efforts, and enhancing dialogue with relevant actors.

The Special Adviser and Special Rapporteur have [jointly advocated](#) for the international community to renew its commitment to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and urged governments to hold national dialogues inclusive of civil society and IDPs. InterAction and ICVA have circulated a call to NGO members for input into an upcoming S.R. report to the General Assembly outlining the S.R.'s thematic priorities and will update members on opportunities to engage in the future.

CONNECTION TO THE IASC

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)—the highest-level humanitarian coordination platform—has the ability to instigate independent evaluations of country-specific or systemic humanitarian responses. In 2022, in line with the recommendation of the HLP, the IASC commissioned an Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement. The Review should conclude by the end of 2023. InterAction and ICVA participate in an informal NGO reference group to receive updates and discuss the substance of the review; other actors, including the S.R. and the Office of the Special Adviser, are part of the review’s formal advisory group. InterAction and ICVA hold formal seats at all levels of the IASC and help oversee the review.

INTERACTION AND ICVA

The NGO community has been advocating for large-scale action on internal displacement for years and has been heavily engaged in the work of the HLP and, more recently, the Action Agenda. InterAction and ICVA members submitted [recommendations](#) before the HLP’s inaugural meeting in 2020 and submitted a [second set](#) later that year. Additionally, they sent [comments to the HLP](#) explaining the link between minimizing harm to civilians during conflict and preventing internal displacement.

Following the publishing of the final [HLP report](#) in 2021, InterAction and ICVA members delivered a [letter](#) to Secretary-General Guterres encouraging the UNSG to take immediate action to implement the report’s recommendations. After the Action Agenda was published in 2022, InterAction and ICVA members came together to [deliver feedback](#) to the U.N. and requested clarification on how civil society could support and advance the Action Agenda’s implementation. Among InterAction and ICVA members’ recommendations were calls for the HLP to focus on priority contexts, incorporate a “whole of society” approach, and establish a high-level independent position with a mandate similar to the Special Adviser. Thanks in part to the advocacy of NGO members, the Action Agenda has been strengthened and reflects many of the core recommendations.

As mentioned above, InterAction and ICVA jointly host meetings with Special Adviser Piper on a quarterly basis, and several NGO representatives have joined various [groupings of the 31 Action Agenda commitments](#).

ICVA and InterAction members participating in the Action Agenda are laying the groundwork to maintain political and programmatic momentum to address internal displacement beyond the Action Agenda’s two-year mandate. NGOs participate in ICVA and InterAction’s quarterly meetings with the Special Adviser, participate in the Special Adviser’s and his team’s country visits, and feed into the IASC independent review. Through these channels, NGOs can engage in advocacy, raise issues of concern, and share best practices—all activities that help balance the agenda’s U.N.-centric approach and can improve the humanitarian system’s response to internal displacement. By participating in the Action Agenda commitment groupings and structures and through the opportunities developed by InterAction, ICVA, and the Office of the Special Adviser, NGOs can build on early progress and lead to improvements in humanitarian responses to internal displacement.

NATIONAL DIALOGUES

In the Action Agenda, Secretary-General Guterres calls on national governments to arrange national dialogues “that draw together affected communities and relevant experts to assess the potential domestic application of this Action Agenda.” This concept has not been further developed, though the Special Adviser and Rapporteur have made subsequent calls for them. NGOs could advance proposals to help organize or support national dialogues in pilot countries.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE?

Please contact ICVA and InterAction colleagues directly.

Rose Worden, rworden@interaction.org

Ellie Doblin, edoblin@interaction.org

Vicente Palacios, vicente.palacios@icvanetwork.org

Gabriela Miranda, gabriela.miranda@icvanetwork.org

Annex I: Action Agenda Commitment Groupings

<i>GROUP 1: Commitments related to Solutions Strategies</i>	
<i>Convener: OSA William Chemaly</i>	
1	<p>Redouble efforts to ensure meaningful participation and systematic inclusion of IDPs and local community members of all ages, genders and diversities in decision-making on solutions, including by scaling up community-based planning and advocating with States to put in place measures to ensure IDPs are heard and included.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: DPPA, DPO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UN HABITAT, UNHCR, UNMAS, U.N. Women, UNOPS</p> <p>NGOs: Action for the Needy, Impact Initiatives</p>
2	<p>Support States to develop and implement whole-of-government solutions strategies with measurable progress indicators that are guided by the views and capacities of IDPs and local communities and to embed solutions within national and local development plans.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, ILO</p> <p>NGOs: Action for the Needy, Impact Initiatives</p>
3	<p>Advocate with States and international actors for stepped-up attention to urban displacement and support to local and city authorities in responding to the needs of urban IDPs and host communities.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT</p>

	NGOs: Action for the Needy, Impact Initiatives
GROUP 2: Commitments related to R.C. Leadership	
<i>Convener: DCO Signe Jepsen</i>	
5	Designate U.N. Resident Coordinators to serve as the U.N.'s lead on solutions at the country level, including: proactively engaging Governments on this issue; ensuring solutions are reflected in UNSDCF's and HRPs; ensuring a dedicated and costed solutions strategy is developed as needed; and ensuring relevant and inclusive coordination mechanisms are in place. U.N. Agencies/entities: DCO, U.N. Women, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF, UN HABITAT, IOM
6	Provide additional support to U.N. Resident Coordinators through ensuring they can draw on advice and support from the global and regional levels and - where relevant - dedicated capacity at the country level. U.N. Agencies/entities: DCO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNOPS, OCHA, UNICEF, UN HABITAT, OHCHR, IOM
GROUP 3: Commitments related to U.N. agencies/entities stepping up on solutions to internal	
<i>Convener: OSA Robert Piper</i>	
4	Strengthen U.N. leadership and accountability on internal displacement by appointing a time-bound Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to work in concert with an inter-agency Steering Group. U.N. agencies/entities: UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, DCO
7	Task U.N. development, peacebuilding, humanitarian, human rights, and DRR and climate change actors to develop global institutional plans, by the end of 2022, for how they will reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement. U.N. agencies/entities: UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UN HABITAT, DCO, FAO, IOM, WFP
10	Host a dedicated thematic window for solutions to internal displacement within the U.N. Joint SDG Fund that supports joint, solutions-focused programs identified by UNCTs. U.N. agencies/entities: UNCDF, U.N. Women, UNOPS, UNHCR, IOM
GROUP 4: Commitments related to solutions financing	
<i>Convener OSA Amine Hillal</i>	
8	Work with development financing partners to ensure solutions are pursued proactively and systematically as part of development financing, based on analytics including socioeconomic data, and incentivize the inclusion of action on internal displacement within national and local development plans and associated budgeting.

	U.N. agencies/entities: UNCDF, UNDP, UNMAS, UNHCR, UN HABITAT
9	<p>Convene an <i>ad hoc</i> forum of relevant development finance actors and affected States to explore how catalytic financing could be made more readily available for solutions and, by the end of September 2022, agree on the most appropriate model and expedite its establishment.</p> <p>U.N. agencies/entities: UNCDF, UNMAS, UNHCR, UN HABITAT</p>
<p>GROUP 5: Commitments related to private sector engagement</p> <p>Convener: OSA Louis Hoffmann</p>	
11	<p>The U.N. will work with relevant partners to identify three to four contexts where there are opportunities to pilot means of strengthening engagement with the private sector, working with U.N. Resident Coordinators.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: UNCDF, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO</p>
<p>GROUP 6: Commitments related to data</p> <p>Convener: IOM Shannon Hayes</p>	
12	<p>Support States to put in place relevant mechanisms to collect, manage and use internal displacement data in line with the International Recommendation on IDP Statistics and other relevant international standards.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNDP, UNOPS, UNHCR, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, UNFPA</p> <p>NGOs: Impact Initiatives, IDMC</p>
13	<p>Convene a time-bound task force of relevant data actors that will examine opportunities and barriers to more effective use of data for solutions and, by the end of September 2022, put forward a proposal for a fit-for-purpose process or coordination model to address data-specific issues and gaps.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, IOM, UNDP, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT</p> <p>NGOs: Impact Initiatives, IDMC</p>
<p>GROUP 7: Commitments related to prevention of displacement crises, focusing on conflict/H.R. violations</p> <p>Convener: UNDP Catherine Osbourne</p>	
14	<p>Work with Governments, regional organizations, local communities and civil society to address the root causes of displacement and to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and mediation that considers displacement risks (and, where present, includes IDPs).</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, Office Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, UNDP, UNHCR, U.N. Women, UNICEF, DPPO, UNMAS, OHCHR, DPPA, IOM</p>

15	<p>To reduce risks of displacement associated with human rights violations and conflict, drive forward implementation of the Call to Action for Human Rights and address displacement specifically in my forthcoming Agenda for Protection.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: Office Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, UNDP, UNHCR, DPO, UNMAS, OHCHR, DPPA, IOM</p>
16	<p>When there are early signs of conflict, renewed violence or threats to civilians, mobilize rapid action to support de-escalation, political negotiation, and conflict resolution, and systematically address internal displacement as part of these efforts.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: Office Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, UNDP, UNHCR, DPO, UNMAS, DPPA, IOM</p>
17	<p>Advocate with Governments to put in place policies and measures to promote the protection of civilians in situations of conflict and violence and reduce displacement risks in line with IHL.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: Office Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF, DPO, UNMAS, DPPA</p>
<p><i>GROUP 8: Commitments related to prevention of displacement crises, focusing on climate change and disasters</i></p> <p><i>Convener: IOM Manuel Pereira supported by Hugo Brandam</i></p>	
18	<p>Advocate strongly for States to deliver on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment to support developing countries and to dedicate at least half of these funds to climate change adaptation and resilience.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNOPS, OCHA</p>
19	<p>Address displacement proactively and systematically as part of the U.N.'s work on climate change, including by supporting the work of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.</p> <p>U.N. agencies/entities: IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, DPO, DPPA, UNFCCC</p>
<p><i>GROUP 9: Commitments on understanding risk intersection, planning & financing (UNDRR to convene)</i></p> <p><i>Convener: UNDRR, Sarah Wade-Apicella</i></p>	
20	<p>Support Governments to ensure climate risks are integrated into policies and investment decision-making, and to ensure that displacement risks and associated protection needs are systematically considered within policies, strategies, and plans relevant to DRR, climate change action, urban planning, and development, including by assisting in drafting or revising the policies in line with the</p>

	<p>State’s commitments under the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNDRR, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNEP, UNICEF, DPO, DPPA, UNFCCC</p>
21	<p>Advocate for donors and development finance actors to utilize data and analysis to dramatically scale up investments in forecast-based financing and anticipatory action while continuing to support broader early warning, DRR, humanitarian assistance, and community resilience programs and to ensure countries can access this finance.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNDRR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNOPS, WFP, OCHA, UNEP, UNICEF</p>
22	<p>U.N. agencies and entities with expertise on DRR, climate change, human rights, humanitarian affairs, development, and peacebuilding will work within their organizations and together to promote a holistic understanding of displacement and risk intersections, including on the intersection of conflict and the impacts of climate change, and they will support UNCTs and HCTs to reflect this in their work.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, U.N. Women, WFP, UNICEF, DPO, DPPA</p>
<p><i>GROUP 10: Commitments to advocacy for better protection and assistance of IDPs</i></p> <p><i>Convener: Jointly with Group 11 UNHCR (Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth) and OCHA (Sebastian Einsiedel)</i></p>	
23	<p>Call on States to protect the rights and respond to the needs of their displaced citizens and residents in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and relevant laws and policy frameworks, such as the Kampala Convention.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNMAS, OHCHR, ILO, IOM</p>
24	<p>Advocate for States to work proactively to ensure IDPs of all ages, genders, and diversities have access to public systems and services.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: UNDP, U.N. Women, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, ILO, UNFPA, IOM</p>
25	<p>Strongly advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access, and continue to provide neutral, impartial, and independent protection and assistance to crisis-affected populations when Governments are unable or unwilling to respond.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNMAS, IOM</p>
26	<p>Work with donors and U.N. agencies on strengthening the effectiveness of financing modalities, including in implementing Grand Bargain commitments.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNMAS</p>

GROUP 11: Commitments related to institutional strengthening/accountability on protection & assistance of IDPs

Convener: Jointly with Group 11 UNHCR (Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth) and OCHA (Sebastian Einsiedel)

27	<p>Complete in early 2023 the independent review of humanitarian response to internal displacement currently being commissioned by the IASC, and act on its findings and recommendations.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, WFP, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, OHCHR, IOM</p> <p>NGOs: Save the Children, Impact Initiatives</p>
28	<p>Promote understanding of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement within the U.N. and among its partners and ensure that the Guiding Principles are the foundation upon which our protection and assistance activities are carried out.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: OCHA, UNICEF, UNMAS, UNHCR</p>
29	<p>Continue strengthening accountability to IDPs and host communities, including by redoubling efforts to deliver on the Participation Revolution promised in the Grand Bargain.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, WFP, UNHCR, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, OHCHR, UNFPA</p> <p>NGOs: Save the Children, Impact Initiatives</p>
30	<p>Work with and through local systems, local authorities and local civil-society actors as much as possible, supporting locally led responses and avoiding the creation of parallel structures.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: UNDP, U.N. Women, UNHCR, UNOPS, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, OHCHR, ILO, IOM</p> <p>NGOs: Save the Children, Impact Initiatives</p>
31	<p>Take steps to lay the foundation for solutions earlier in responses by incorporating pathways to solutions into HRPs and recognizing solutions-enabling programming as a priority while simultaneously working to understand and mitigate future displacement risks.</p> <p>U.N. Agencies/entities: FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, UNMAS, UN HABITAT, IOM</p> <p>NGOs: Save the Children, Impact Initiatives</p>

Office of the UNSG's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement 14.06.2023