

**Remarks for Assistant-Secretary-General**  
**Reflecting on Effective Strategies to Address Internal Displacement**

New York, 24 October, 2016

*As delivered*

It is a pleasure to be here with you today.

I would like to start by commending the work of Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Dr. Chaloka Beyani, who for the last six years has defended and promoted the rights of internally displaced people worldwide, and who has been an essential member of the IASC and partner to OCHA.

Conflict and violence have forced a record number of people to be internally displaced worldwide, at over 40 million, while an additional 20-25 million people are displaced internally each year due to natural disasters. These people will remain displaced, on average, for over a decade or longer. Many of them will face discrimination, depletion of their assets, and in many instances will severely face limited access to basic services, including to housing, schools, and jobs.

Our collective response to these millions of people is frankly, falling short. In September 2016, the ERC together with the Special Rapporteur, the Under-Secretary-General of UNDP and NGO partners have issued an open letter on IDPs in which they called for a new approach to the internally displaced, both in terms of better prevention and better solutions. In the letter far greater international attention is called for, for IDPs as a matter of urgency. This is one of OCHA's key priorities.

The approach that we are calling for builds on the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, and the call for effective strategies to address internal displacement at the 19 September Summit for Refugees and Migrants.

At the World Humanitarian Summit, there was widespread consensus that we need to adopt a new approach to forced displacement. This approach recognizes that displacement, which is a long-term issue, can no longer be seen as a short-term humanitarian challenge in which we are “managing caseloads” over years. Instead governments and policy-makers must take on their responsibility to address displacement as a long-term development, socio-economic and political challenge.

For humanitarian and development partners, effectively addressing protracted displacement in long-term crises involves a shift in the way we are working together. Through this new way of working we must aim not only to save lives in the short term, but to work with development and other partners over years, to work towards collective outcomes of reducing vulnerability and need, based on our comparative advantage.

This new approach to displacement will mean governments, development partners and investors must integrate IDPs into their development plans, so IDPs can access housing, livelihood opportunities and basic services.

It means that we, as partners, must support and reinforce local systems rather than undermining them by setting up parallel structures.

And it requires donors and investors to provide flexible, long-term financing to support it.

The Grand Bargain, one of the key outcomes of the WHS, holds promise to strengthen the system for a more efficient, transparent, accountable and effective way of working. As a part of these commitments, efforts are underway, for example, to ensure systematic consideration of cash-based programming when evaluating response options and to improve its coordination where it is being used. Where markets and operational contexts permit, cash assistance can be used in contexts of protracted displacement, can strengthen local markets and, where possible and appropriate, it can be linked to social safety nets.

On the humanitarian side meanwhile, we must respond to the immediate life-saving and protection needs of the displaced, while supporting their resilience and self-sufficiency, so they can rebuild their lives.

We can learn a lot from the best practice on displacement that is already out there. For instance we can learn from the way that Colombia is setting strong laws and policies, working with humanitarian and development partners to help IDPs. Or from the Democratic Republic of Congo where partners have developed multi-year plans to reduce vulnerability over time. To learn from best practice and to improve our understanding of

people's experiences of internal displacement, OCHA has commissioned a study which will be launched next year.