

**Terms of Reference**  
**Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG)**  
**On**  
**Displacement and Return**

**Background**

With over 6 million Afghans having returned to Afghanistan since 2002 and with on-going conflict-induced internal displacement, it is vital to ensure a coordinated approach to seeking durable solutions for returnees and IDPs as an integral part of their communities. It is anticipated that in 2017, up to 1.1 million Afghans will return from neighboring countries (Humanitarian Response Plan, 2017) and it can be expected that there will also be increased returns of Afghans from European countries, placing additional pressures on the country.

This is in addition to the 1.2 million protracted IDPs (early 2015), over 623,000 newly displaced (2016) and over 620,000 returns from Pakistan and 440,000 returns from Iran (2016). The upward trend of an average of 1,600 people displaced per day last year, is increasing, and is nearly six-fold that recorded in 2012. Additionally, over 20 percent of the current population of Afghanistan are returnees, which is almost one in every four Afghans.

Due to the already limited absorption capacity of host communities, with 75% of returnees and IDPs settling in five main provinces Nangarhar, Kabul, Laghman, Kunduz, Baghlan, and the corresponding strain on the Afghan economy and local service delivery, the risks of secondary displacement – or even the emergence of negative coping mechanisms - for returnees and IDPs remain high. If existing durable solutions needs are not addressed and planned for, this threatens to increase the numbers of displaced people further.

Some of the primary challenges for returnees and IDPs derive from their access to decision making mechanisms, the lack of access to civil documentation and to land, which impacts on their access to services (education, health etc), information, justice, housing, property rights, and livelihood opportunities. After living in neighboring countries for up to 30 years, returnees face challenges when they return due to insecurity in their places of origin, lack of connections and networks. IDPs also face similar barriers accessing services when unable to return to their places of origin.

As humanitarian and development challenge, addressing durable solutions for IDPs and returnees requires a fundamental paradigm shift.

**Overview**

The transformation of the Re-integration Working Group (RWG) into the Durable Solutions Working Group on Displacement and Return (DSWG) was decided on 13 June 2017 by the RWG members. The RWG has been convening since 2015 in Kabul and has responded to the need for harmonized coordination, information sharing and action planning to facilitate durable solutions for returnees, IDPs and host communities, at the national and provincial levels. The new denomination (DSWG) will allow to include all population groups into the planning and implementation process. Moreover, the newly established DSWG will have a strengthened strategic role in the planning and implementation of durable solutions through newly formalized linkages to institutional decision making mechanisms including to the DSRSG/RC/HC, the HCT/clusters, the UNCT/PMT, and importantly, the DIREC. The DSWG will also serve as a facilitator for linking the government structure (DiREC) and the UN system on humanitarian and development planning and implementation.

## **Objective**

The overall objective is to facilitate and promote durable solutions for returnees and IDPs. This will be ensured through coordinating humanitarian and development stakeholders, initiatives and activities with a view to developing a 'durable solutions strategy'. Additionally, identifying, mapping, addressing and monitoring major needs and gaps; improving information gathering and exchange; developing evidence-based recommendations and to jointly mobilizing resources for reintegration and inter-agency activities will bolster durable solutions. The DSWG is a platform for information sharing and decision-making at the planning and programmatic levels, and between the national level and the field.

**The DSWG will facilitate information sharing, planning and programming on durable solutions for IDPs and returnees between the humanitarian cluster system, the UNCT, the government coordination mechanisms and development actors.** The DSWG will be the primary mechanism through which the government, UN, and NGOs will coordinate the planning and programming of durable solutions.

## **Outputs\***

1. Durable Solutions Strategy for IDPs and Returnees based on existing strategies and policies;
2. Action Plan to implement the Durable Solutions Strategy for the UN and NGOs linked to the DIREC Action Plan and the Provincial Level Action Plans;
3. Sectoral gap analysis;
4. Fundraising Strategy linked to a durable solutions funding mechanism
5. Planning and programmatic recommendations to DiREC, the HCT/ICCT, UNCT/PMT.

## **Target Population**

The DSWG will focus on facilitating durable solutions for returnees (documented and undocumented), newly and protracted internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities.

## **Guiding documents:**

The guiding document for durable solutions for IDPs is the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and the Secretary General's decision on durable solutions (nr 2011/20).

Other policies and strategies include the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and its National Priority Programmes, the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR – 2013), the National IDP Policy (2013), the Comprehensive Return and Repatriation Strategy (2015), The DiRECT Policy Framework on Return and Displacement and its Action Plan (2016).

## **Chairmanship**

Recognizing the lead role of DiREC, the DSWG will be chaired by MoRR and co-chaired by UNHCR, UNDP and IOM on a rotational basis. The Secretariat of DSWG will be assured by the co-chair agency.

At the provincial level, the planning and implementation of the durable solutions will be coordinated and fulfilled by the Provincial Reintegration Committees (PRCs), where established.

## **Membership**

Membership of the DSWG will be open to relevant humanitarian and development actors

including DIREC members (President's Office, CEO's Office), Government line ministries, UN agencies (UNCT/PMT members), NGOs, IFIs, cluster leads, and civil society organizations, who are actively engaged in implementing durable solution-related activities for IDPs and returnees in Afghanistan.

### **Frequency of meetings**

The DSWG will meet every six weeks. On a bi-annual basis or as needed, donors and other stakeholders will be invited to join the group for tailored briefing sessions on on-going activities, achievements and continued challenges.

### **Coordination with other mechanisms**

The DSWG will ensure coordination with the government, development and humanitarian coordination structures. The DSWG will provide regular updates on the situation of IDPs and returnees, key updates from DiREC, Clusters, PMT, and provincial working groups on latest developments and decisions related to IDPs and returnees to ensure coordination and linkages between the various humanitarian and development coordination structures. DiREC will regularly update the DSWG with national developments, facilitate information sharing with members, and will address challenges, concerns and barriers to implementing durable solutions. ACBAR and NRC will facilitate NGO representation and information sharing with NGO actors.

### **Link with decision making structures**

The DSWG will be held as part of a comprehensive Government, UN and NGO effort to mainstream reintegration/integration needs into existing development policies, plans and programs. As such, the working group will provide planning and programmatic recommendations to DiREC, HCT/ICC, the UNCT/PMT including on streamlining barriers to implementing durable solutions.

### **Priorities**

1. Facilitating information sharing, participation and representation of humanitarian, and development actors for better coordination
2. Bridging humanitarian and development gaps
3. Harmonizing national plans, strategies and policies at the provincial levels
4. Streamlining reintegration coordination mechanisms at the national and provincial levels

### **Modalities**

- 1) A work plan for the DSWG will be prepared and agreed upon
- 2) Minutes will be circulated after each meeting with related action points
- 3) A thematic/sectoral focus and agenda will help guide discussions
- 4) Policy, procedural or implementation challenges will be streamlined through DiREC