



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
1 December 2015

Original: English

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### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-fourth session

3-12 February 2016

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: rethinking and strengthening social  
development in the contemporary world**

### **Statement submitted by Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Strengthening Social Protection for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) within the Framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria**

#### Introduction

Forced migration has become one of the most topical issues worldwide. People are forced to flee from violent conflict as opposed to natural disasters and the search for “greener pastures” which has been the major reason for migration in the past. This situation has increased the number of displaced people. Of the 12.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the 21 Sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria has the highest number of IDPs with 3.3 million.<sup>1</sup>

Insurgency began in 2009, when the jihadist rebel group Boko Haram started an armed rebellion against the government and people of Nigeria. In 2013, more than 1,000 people including women and children died in the conflict. The violence escalated dramatically in 2014, with 10,849 deaths. There was massive exodus of people into neighbouring towns, states and border countries like Chad and Cameroon as many were forced to leave their homes with little or no possession to relative “safety”.

On 25 September 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled, “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (SDGs). The SDGs are a broad range of developmental goals that focus on issues. Although these goals generally ensure the ultimate development of people, none specifically addresses the IDP situation, which is now a growing global phenomenon. However, if the SDGs are implemented well, could tackle the problems of social protection of citizens. Specifically, Goal 11 which is to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” is relatively close to the issue of displacement and forms the basis in which the issue of protection of the IDPs should be given immediate attention. It is essential that the issue of the social protection of IDPs be streamlined into all the SDGs.

Nigeria is currently developing a National Social Protection Policy to address poverty, vulnerability and inequality. This policy should include IDPs — not only to address their protection and welfare in makeshift camps, but their rehabilitation (psychologically and physically) and sustainable return to their original home, in other words, finding durable solution for them.

#### Protection Trends

Alarming increases of security incidents have occurred around and inside IDPs sites. The recent attack inside Malkohi IDP camp in Yola, Adamawa on 11 September 2015 resulted in the death of seven IDPs and injuries to a number of civilians, including humanitarian staff of the National Emergency Management Agency. This emphasizes the deteriorating security situation around IDP sites and raises the long-feared prospect of Boko Haram targeting of humanitarians.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Overview 2014.

In August and September 2015, 11,222 Nigerians returned from Cameroon to the border town of Sahuda in Adamawa State. Returnees are registered in Sahuda and transported to Mubi for screening. They are then transported either to Malkohi, NYSC or Fufore camps in Yola, to Borno State, or to host communities. Key protection issues include family separation, as many Nigerian returnees report being arrested and sent back to Nigeria with their families remaining in Cameroon, as well as a lack of documentation.

Contributing to serious protection concerns was an outbreak of Cholera in Maiduguri, Borno, with over 500 cases and 14 deaths as well as estimated 302,000 people affected due to flooding. The Protection Monitoring Summary of September 2015 revealed forced displacement, killings, security incidents, destruction of property and arbitrary detention as the most prevalent protection abuses.<sup>2</sup>

#### Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons

- Insecurity and lack of protection, including arrests at IDP sites following bomb at Malkohi camp.
- Lack of an effective targeted response to the most vulnerable individuals.
- Immediate, medium-term and long-term support to address the impact of trauma and physical violence on immediate survivors and secondary victims, including unwanted pregnancies and associated stigma, to enhance reintegration into communities/families.
- Major gaps in ensuring protection of and assistance to “invisible” IDPs living in host communities.
- Limited presence of child protection and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) actors in host communities in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe is hindering the identification and response to the needs of children at risk and survivors, and SGBV survivors among displaced populations.
- No access to, and replacement of, personal and other documentation.
- Separation of family members during displacement.
- Non-participation in public affairs at all levels compared to the resident population.
- Inadequate (or lack of) effective remedies for displacement-related violations, access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.

#### Challenges of Social Protection faced by IDPs

- a. Low coverage of existing programmes.
- b. The implementation of a narrow set of instruments.
- c. Poor service delivery.
- d. Fragmentation of approaches and projects across the country.

<sup>2</sup> PSWG Factsheet, September 2015.

## Strengthening Social Protection in Nigeria

There are several practical steps both authorities and humanitarian actors can take to improve lives of internally displaced persons:

Develop an all-encompassing social protection policy framework to provide clear institutional roles and responsibilities, lay out numerous options for social protection in the country, facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange on the different types of social protection interventions suitable in the Nigerian context, and promote inter-sectoral and federal-state coordination.

Generate political commitment to social protection at the federal and state level.

Allocate additional resources to finance the scaling up of social protection programming.

Funding for social protection should be increased by mobilising domestic resources (future growth); promoting increases in official development assistance, specifically targeted at social protection and improving the public financial management of public expenditure (at both federal and state level).

Investment in social service delivery should be increased to maximize the effectiveness of social protection programmes in terms of human development impacts.

Integrate an equity focus into the design and implementation of programmes.

Strengthen governance features of social protection programmes within institutions as well as sensitising programme participants to hold implementers accountable.<sup>3</sup>

## Recommendations

The primary function of a government is the welfare and security of its citizens. Everyone has the right to social protection. All internally displaced persons also have the right to social protection, even though their ability to access this right is inevitably affected by displacement. However, particular principles need to be carefully adhered to, while paying attention to the specific context in which IDPs find themselves. It is therefore essential to adopt a solutions-based and rights-based approach to ensure that these people who have been horribly forced out of their homes are adequately protected. As the SDGs are implemented, these goals must ensure that the rights of internally displaced persons are guaranteed.

The needs, rights and legitimate interests of IDPs should be the primary considerations guiding all policies and decisions on durable solutions.

All relevant actors need to respect the right of IDPs to make an informed and voluntary choice on what durable solution to pursue and to participate in the planning and management of durable solutions.

The choice of all IDPs to locally integrate or settle elsewhere in the country, in the absence of the option to return, must not be regarded as a renunciation of his/her right to return should that choice later become feasible.

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<sup>3</sup> Holmes et al (2011) Social protection in Nigeria: an overview of programmes and their effectiveness Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

Under no circumstances, should IDPs be encouraged or compelled to return or relocate to areas where their life, safety, liberty or health would be at risk.

The causes for displacement will need to be understood and addressed. In a context of armed conflict, this may require the re-establishment of sustainable safety and security, and a peace process or peace building measures.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons — UNHCR, <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/social-protection/lang--en/index.htm>.