



LAUNCH OF THE 2010 GLOBAL OVERVIEW REPORT ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

with

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Warren Hoge:

Good morning. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's Vice President For External Relations. I want to start by apologizing for any absence of our usual calm cordiality at IPI in welcoming you here this morning. We were pressed for time and sent out messages to people saying we would be starting promptly at 9:00 am because one of our panel members, Baroness Amos, thought she had to leave at 9:45 to attend a meeting with the Secretary-General this morning. But Ban Ki-moon, ever a good friend of IPI, has called off that meeting, and happily she can remain with us until 10:00 am.

That said, an hour is a short time for all we have planned. So we will still stick to our accelerated schedule. In that connection, we have postponed the coffee and light breakfast until our conclusion at 10:00 am so we can proceed to the subject immediately. So let me get to the point without ado.

On all our minds this morning is internal displacement, a much more disruptive force in the lives of millions of people than that dry term would suggest. You will be hearing about that in detail momentarily.

IPI is very pleased to be once again hosting this launch of the global overview report on internal displacement and to be welcoming such a distinguished panel. They are, in the order in which they will speak, Elisabeth Rasmusson on my right, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council; Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General For Children and Armed Conflicts. You will find their full biographies in your program. You will also find on your seats, or on the side credenzas, the report itself, a coversheet of the highlights and a press release.

The cameras are here because this event is being streamed live from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. And there are people following this launch from abroad. With that in mind, would you please turn off any electrical devices because they will interfere with that transmission.

Once our three panelists have made their remarks, we will go to a question-and-answer period. The organizers have asked that I recognize journalists first. And those of you who know my background will know that that is an order I can easily follow. Also, Ms. Rasmusson is available for interviews afterwards and we will provide space for that. Once again I apologize for the haste, and Ms. Rasmusson, a warm welcome back to IPI. The floor is yours.

Elisabeth Rasmusson: Thank you very much. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends, good morning. It is really a pleasure, as well as an honor, to be here today to launch the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's Global Overview for 2010. I only have this copy, but I think you all have proper copies on your chairs. And this is where you will find all the information in, I think, a very user-friendly and clear way.

I'm particularly happy to be back at the IPI in the distinguished company of Valerie Amos and Radhika Coomaraswamy, two exceptional women, who both hold extremely important UN mandates in relation to IDP protection. I would like to thank them both for their support in being here today. And I would like to thank IPI and Warren Hoge for hosting this important event.

Right now the world's eyes are on Libya, and rightly so. However, at the same time, we must not forget other conflict situations. Look at Ivory Coast, where civilians are paying a very high price for a political deadlock, resulting in massive displacement. More than 500,000 people have been internally displaced, and more are fleeing as we speak. These people are not protected. And we, the international community, are incapable of responding properly.

The global overview documents that, at the end of 2010, there were 27.5 million internally-displaced people in the world. And this is the highest number recorded in the last decade. And we are also seeing that the number during the last ten years is steadily rising. When we look at the phenomena of internal displacement, we have to say that in the last ten years, significant progress has been made in terms of our understanding and our response to internal-displacement situations. Many countries have developed and adopted legislations and policies, and also regional organizations have developed instruments to protect internally-displaced people. However, an increasing number of people around the world have been forced to flee within their own

country. This increase is the consequence of new displacement in ongoing, long-standing or unresolved conflicts, except from one country, Kyrgyzstan, which is the only new country from 2010.

In Somalia, people have been displaced for 20 years. A new displacement is ongoing. I was recently there witnessing the appalling situation for internally-displaced people living in the capital, Mogadishu. They find themselves literally in the line of fire between the warring parties, and also in this crisis, the international community isn't able to protect the civilians when the authorities are failing. Increasingly, new displacement is also triggered by armed violence related to drug and gang violence, such as in Colombia and Mexico.

By the way, it's worth noting that in Mexico the number of displacement in 2010 is higher than the number of newly displaced in Afghanistan for the same period. On a positive note, Africa was the only continent in 2010 that saw a decline in IDP figures. This also confirms a trend that we have seen since 2004 as the numbers in Africa are going down. But despite this progress, the African continent still holds 40 percent of the internally-displaced people in the world. And nearly half of them are found in Sudan, where the number is between 4.5 and 5.2 million internally-displaced people. In the Middle East, the number of IDPs has more than tripled in the last decade. And it reached close to 4 million in the end 2010. This is the result both of escalating conflict in Iraq and Yemen, and of unresolved displacement situations, such as in Syria, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

In Asia the number of internally-displaced people rose by 70 percent during the last five years, mainly as a result of continued conflict in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But I also have to say that, in Asia, it's difficult to get access to information. This is probably the continent that we know the least about. But we see that the more information and the more access we get, the higher the numbers in the different countries that we are looking at.

Once people are displaced, their vulnerabilities increase dramatically, especially for children, older persons and people with disabilities and people of certain minorities. Internally-displaced persons are often the victim of sexual violence, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where killings and rapes of internally-displaced people continues at a horrifying rate, despite the presence of the world's largest peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, that also has a quite strong protection mandate. When neither country rulers nor UN peacekeeping missions are able to protect civilians, I ask myself, how should humanitarian organizations best respond? We cannot leave the internally-displaced people unattended. Often the humanitarian organizations on the ground are the first in line to respond to the protection crisis. But this is substitution and it's not sustainable. Therefore, it's utterly important that the international community strengthens and supports the capacity of governments or weak governments, as well as peacekeeping missions in countries where they are deployed. I'm very, very grateful for being here today. And thank you very much for the attention.

Hoge:

Baroness Amos?

Valerie Amos:

Warren, thank you very much indeed. And as you've said, this is a particularly pertinent time to be having today's launch given what we are seeing around the world. And, Elisabeth, can I thank you for the use of the term "exceptional" in describing myself and Radhika, a term which I actually think is more appropriately ascribed to you. So thank you for that. Can I start by thanking NRC and IDMC for inviting me to help launch this year's global overview. I gather that

I'm in a long line of emergency relief coordinators who have participated in this event. And I'm delighted to be able to do so.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, one of the reasons that I'm pleased to be here this morning is because there is a tremendous value and importance which we, at OCHA and the wider humanitarian community, attach to IDMC's monitoring, analysis and advocacy on internal displacement around the world. Elisabeth has very clearly set out this year's global overview, which I think provides a very stark indication of the magnitude of the challenge posed by internal displacement. It's a horribly bureaucratic term which describes a situation that can be grim, terrifying, demeaning and tragic, and a situation that no one in the world should have to endure. Yet, millions of people are facing this reality every day.

Internal-displacement, as we all know, is as old as war itself. But it should not be considered, and must not be considered, inevitable. More can and should be done to prevent it. We've spent years raising awareness of the importance of international humanitarian law, seeking to ensure that the responsibilities enshrined in that legislation are understood worldwide. Now more than ever, there is greater interest around the world. We have a 24/7 media, but we also, I think, have populations in many countries that are much more interested in the impact of conflict or disasters on ordinary people.

It is a sad fact that, today, many parties to conflicts have little or no respect for the international laws meant to spare civilians from the effects of hostilities. Continued and serious compliance with the principles of distinction and proportionality enshrined in international humanitarian law would mean fewer civilians having to flee their homes in search of relative safety. And when displacement happens, returns would be simplified if residential areas and essential infrastructure were left undamaged.

We, of course, all recognize that conflict brings casualties. But so much of the destruction is deliberate. We would also see less displacement if the trend in some countries towards using forced displacement as a deliberate tactic by warring parties were stopped. Experience shows that most parties to conflicts have a long way to go to make these principles meaningful on the ground in terms of practice. And we have, I think, to continue our advocacy on this issue at all levels.

No less serious, as I myself have seen, is the displacement caused by natural disasters. In the aftermath of major disasters, affected people often need protection as much as they need material assistance. This means, for example, protection in the form of insuring access to assistance for vulnerable or marginalized groups, such as older people, people with disabilities, or particular ethnic or religious groups. It means protection for often vulnerable children. It means protection in the form of replacing lost identity and other documents that are often essential for access to services and assistance. And, of course, it means protection from sexual and gender-based violence in the often highly-charged and over-crowded environment of evacuation camps and centers. The recent decision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to play a more predictable role in coordinating protection in natural disasters is a critically important step, in my view, towards remedying this. And it's one that I fully support.

One final reflection: displacement is being driven to higher levels today by violence in Côte d'Ivoire, which Elisabeth mentioned, in Somalia, instability in

North Africa and the Middle East, and the continuing impact of natural disasters on poor and vulnerable communities worldwide. The work of IDMC and others monitoring and tracking these trends is an essential tool in helping those of us who must respond and need to respond, and need to focus our resources and efforts appropriately. It also helps to make the case to the international community that more must be done to prevent it.

I think that we all have a role to play; it's our collective responsibility to continue to press for adherence to the principles which can make such a difference. I very much hope that this year's report will continue that trend, will help us to make that case, and will really help to make a difference for ordinary people on the ground. Thank you very much.

Hoge: Thank you very much. And now to Radhika Coomaraswamy.

Radhika Coomaraswamy: Thank you very much, Mr. Hoge, Ms. Rasmusson, Ms. Amos, all very exceptional people as you suggested. I want to first thank the IPI for having this session, and also the Norwegian Refugee Council, as well as the monitoring center that has produced this global overview of trends and developments.

What I am going to do is focus primarily on the issue of children, because as you know, that is my mandate. If you look at the overview, of the 27.5 million IDPs, 12.2-13.7 million of them are children. The top five internal-displacement situations, Colombia, with 2.1 million children, Sudan with 1.7 million children, Iraq, 1.3 million children, DRC, 900,000 children. And, yes, those are the first four. These are also situations that are covered by us in our annual report to the Secretary-General.

In at least 11 of these countries, children were recruited into armed groups from IDP camps. As you know, children in IDP camps are particularly vulnerable to recruitment and use. And also in at least 18 countries, they faced threats to physical security while exercising their right to education. This was especially true of the children of Afghanistan.

So what I would like is to paint a picture really of the extreme vulnerability of children in situations of armed conflict, and particularly, IDP children. As you know, our office monitors six grave violations against children for the Security Council. And internally displaced children are at risk for all six.

The first is the recruitment and use of children, as well as abduction, especially to become child soldiers. The University of Pittsburgh, doing some research on this issue with regard to camps, has shown how when there is security in IDP camps, the number of children recruited falls dramatically. So the security in camps is absolutely a key in conflict areas with regard to the recruitment and use of children as child soldiers.

I was in Sudan and met with some children in abuse, and they described to me how constantly they were recruited, coming in and out of the camps. And sometimes out of sheer boredom, they have nothing to do, and they feel so completely vulnerable and discriminated against, they join these armed groups.

The second grave violation we monitor is sexual violence. And, again, IDP children are at risk. As you know, in Africa, the hierarchy in the family is such that the girls go out to collect the firewood despite the risk to them. And as you know, there was a great deal of rape, especially in Darfur again, with regard to the

collection of firewood. And we've tried to solve this problem, the UN assists in this by giving them all some stoves that they can use in the camps. But still this risk continues. And also in the old days, camps were constructed with toilets far away from the IDP camps. And often, when they went to the toilets, girls were subject to sexual violence. So that's another issue that we monitor with regard to IDP children.

The third: attacks on schools and hospitals. IDP children, as you know, are often denied the right to education. The notion of education as an essential component of emergency assistance is a very new concept, and education has often been seen as development aid. Now, there is an increased effort in the humanitarian community to make sure that as you set up the camp, you also set up the school as well as activities for children.

Denial of humanitarian access and assistance, is another thing that we monitor. And IDP children often lack basic needs, water, sanitation, food, shelter and medicine. When I was in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, I noticed there was absolutely nothing in that camp. There was no clinic, there was no school. But things are much better now.

When I was in Democratic Republic of Congo recently, we found that humanitarians have become much better at delivering activities. And now there are not only schools but leisure activities for children. So we ourselves have evolved over time to better deliver. But a lot depends on who is running the camp. There's no uniformity often. Different NGOs and different agencies run camps differently, and some are better than others. So I think what is important is to have uniform standards and that everybody make sure that camps are run accordingly.

As you know, my office has decided to make work on IDP children a key component of its advocacy strategy. The first thing we did was to write up Rights and Guarantees of IDP Children, which were noted by both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. And the key elements of that is to ensure family reunion, which we think is crucial.

I remember in Central African Republic, meeting a young girl. When her parents fled, there were three children in the family, two boys and a girl. And they could only save two children. So they of course saved the two boys, leaving her alone. She had lost her capacity for speech, et cetera. But the need to reunify families is very special. The girl was extremely wonderful.

The right to documentation, we feel, and the right not to be discriminated against are also key. The right to security, freedom of movement, and provide security both against sexual violence and recruitment of children. And finally, the right to basic services that are outlined above.

These are all mentioned, along with what we see as the guiding principle that operates all through the world, and especially in IDP camps, that any program we do for children should be in the best interest of the child. We have a working paper spelling out all these rights and guarantees and examples of it, and we're in the process of sending it out to protection partners. It was a UN full consultation in writing this report within the humanitarian community, other UN agencies, and NGOs. We hope that we can be able to advocate on this and to make it a check-list, when we go into IDP camps, of what needs to be done to ensure that children are protected.

So let me conclude again by thanking the Monitoring Center.

And let me say that, ironically, of a series of young people working for the UN I have recently met in the field, many of them were former IDPs or refugees. One I just met recently was from the UNRWA camps in Palestine, another come from Thailand, from the Myanmar refugees there. And though they had spent a large part of their life in refugee camps, thanks to the opportunities provided in those camps, they had now become UN officials. So I think we have to think about that, whether we're going to make IDP children embittered and angry and future rebel leaders, or whether we're going to see them using the IDP transit phase as a transit to normalcy. Thank you.

Hoge: Thank you. And thank all the panelists for being so succinct while being so substantial. As a result, we now have 30 minutes for a question-and-answer period. As I mentioned at the outset, the organizers asked that I recognize journalists first. So could I ask any journalists-- Edith Lederer of the Associated Press, wait for the microphone, please. Edie?

Edith Lederer: Thank you. I recall that when the late Richard Holbrooke was ambassador here, he really railed against the distinction between refugees and IDPs and tried to do something about it, because of the huge difference in their treatment with the UN being responsible for taking care of refugees, and of course, no responsibility for taking care of IDPs. Is there anything-- I know that Ms. Amos talked about trying to get all of these people who are involved in conflicts to adhere more closely to international humanitarian law, but is there anything more significant being done to really try and get more concerted and regular international help to IDPs?

Hoge: Can you take that question?

Amos: Yes, I'm happy to take it. I think there are two different things here in your question. The first is about where should responsibility lie? And I am a very firm believer in holding governments accountable for the responsibility that they have for their citizens. And I think that we should do everything that we can to ensure that, with respect to the issue of IDPs, as an international community, we are working to hold those governments accountable. Linked to that is the fact that, as governments more and more want to establish and make the case for their sovereignty, we should use that as a mechanism for working with governments on the implications it has in terms of responsibility.

The second part of your question is about the actual treatment of IDPs themselves, and what kind of support and assistance can we give? And certainly through our work on the wider humanitarian response, this is something that is part of our responsibility to improve. If I give the example of what is happening in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia right now, we have a situation where over 75,000 people have left Côte d'Ivoire and gone into Liberia and are being dealt with as refugees, with UNHCR taking the lead. But within Côte d'Ivoire itself, just within Abidjan, we have over 300,000 people who have been displaced in one particular district in Abidjan, Abobo, where the UN is not able to operate freely because of the security situation. So where our access to those people is much, much more limited and where our ability to support them in terms of the provision of basic services is much, much more limited. So our advocacy with both the Gbagbo and Ouattara elements is important, but crucially, resolving the security issue is absolutely critical. So it's not that we want to treat IDPs differently, but quite often the context in which we are seeking to support those individuals doesn't actually allow us even to give them access to the most basic services.

Rasmusson: Thank you. Just in addition to what the Emergency Relief Coordinator is saying, I think that there has been improvement also in the way the international community is responding to IDPs. Because we do have better coordination and we have the cluster system, that could obviously be improved, there is clearer roles and responsibilities. And I think that it was really a very important step in the right direction when the UNHCR took the responsibility for the coordination of protection of internally-displaced people when governments are not able to do it.

But I also think, as Valerie was saying, there are different challenges in the context of IDPs. Because very often they are in areas where the security situation doesn't allow the UN, or often humanitarian agencies, to access them. So that's one thing which I think is a difference, that it's more difficult to access internal-displaced people than refugees. And I also think about the fact that most of internal-displaced today are in urban settings. And there it's also very difficult to access them because we don't have enough information, we haven't done enough profiling of who they are and what are their needs and how can we support them? So that's something that we have to work more on.

And then, there is another issue that the number of IDPs is almost double of refugees. So therefore, the requirement when it comes to assistance is of course also much higher. So I think since Holbrooke--I think Holbrooke reacted very, very strongly after he'd been in Angola, and he saw the enormous difference between the IDP and the refugees treatment, I think that we have done very concrete improvements, particularly on behalf of the international community. But I think that there are still a very long way to go.

Hoge: One reason I always like to call on Edie Lederer is that she knows how to ask a question that all three panelists want to comment on. Radhika Coomaraswamy?

Coomaraswamy: Thank you. I think one has to recognize that there is a fundamental difference in the sense that here, practice is ahead of the norm. Because as you know, there's a convention on refugees, but there's no nominative convention with regard to IDPs. So, legally, they are at a different level. And in practice, it was only since 1980s that the UNHCR began to look and help with IDPs. And I think now, of course, as Valerie and Elisabeth said, practice has caught up and there is a lot being done for IDPs. If you go to the camps, as I did, and compare to ten years ago, you'll see the enormous difference in practice. But I think the case can be made that we should move toward trying to crystallize the nominative framework of IDPs as well, maybe move to some kind of declaration at the General Assembly or something that pictures us to make sure that these rights are recognized. And that's why we went ahead with the children. Because when we went into camps, we found there were different ways that children were being dealt with in camps depending on who was in charge. So I think it may be the right time to try and move toward some nominative framework.

Hoge: Any other journalists in the room who have a question? If not, let me proceed to the floor. Please, just raise your hand and we'll wait for the microphone to get to you. And, please, identify yourself. Here, the gentleman on the aisle.

Palitha Kahona: Thank you, Mr. Hoge. I also thank the panel for a very informative presentation this morning. I'm familiar with two of the panelists, very familiar in fact.

Hoge: Can you identify yourself please, just for the sake of the recording?

Kahona: I'm Palitha Kahona, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Just listening to the three panelists, one gets the impression that

there's a lot of ad-hockery going on without really dealing with the situation of IDPs on the basis of existing principles, existing experience. There's a tendency to deal with each situation as if it happened for the first time. Maybe I misunderstood the panel, but that impression was created for me.

Coming from Sri Lanka, I'm very familiar with what we did with hundreds of thousands of IDPs that resulted from the conflict. In fact, at the middle of 2009, we had close to 300,000 IDPs pouring out of the conflict areas into government-controlled areas. Of course, compared to 27 million scattered around the world, this might look like a drop in the bucket. But in taking on a point that was raised by Under-Secretary-General Amos, the government assumed responsibility for each one of these IDPs.

So the government established camps for them, although at the time, they were considered as concentration camps. But these camps served a purpose. The primary purpose was they were all in the place where the government could look after them. Shelter was provided, medical care was provided, 168 doctors from the government's cadres were designated to go and work with these IDPs. Schools were established for the children. And these were elementary schools, but nevertheless, places where the children could go to during the day.

I must also say that, today, less than two years after the conflict, there's not a single child left in these camps. And furthermore, out of the 300,000, we have sent back 280,000 or more. There are only about 17,000 left. And amongst the 17,000, also there are people who have been told to go home but cannot go home because of landmines and other obstacles of that nature. Food is provided, three meals are provided by the government to these IDPs everyday, which cost the government \$1 million dollars a day, but food is provided. Shelter was provided. Medical care was provided. Educational facilities are provided. So I think there are lessons that we can learn from other places. I'm not saying Sri Lanka is the best example of this case, but looking around the world, you'll find that even in Southern Europe, the Balkans, they still have IDPs ten years after the conflict.

So I think it's very important not to treat each situation as a unique case. There are unique aspects, no doubt about that, but there are lessons that can be learned from elsewhere in the world. And I'm very proud to say that, in our case, that we have almost dealt with our IDP situation in the best way we can given that we are third-world country and a poor country. Thank you.

Hoge: Thank you, Ambassador. Would any of the panel members like to comment on that comment? Yes, please.

Amos: I'd like to comment on that. I mean, I don't think we deal with each case as if it's ad-hoc or new. I think there are very clear systems which have been established. But I think we also recognize that the context is different in each country very often. Also the way that governments want to address these issues is different. And a key thing we have to recognize here is that governments very often have a particular agenda, particularly when you're dealing in a situation which is a conflict-related one. And the responsibility that governments should have to their citizens in terms of consultation and so on does not necessarily always take place. Governments sometimes want to force IDPs to do particular kinds of things. And we, as the international community, have a responsibility to raise those concerns with a government, which can cause all kinds of tensions in a relationship. So I think we have recognize the highly sensitive and volatile political context that we're very often dealing with when we're talking about IDPs

in a conflict situation; and even in a more straight-forward disaster-related situation, you can have some of these tensions emerge as well.

Rasmusson:

I just wanted to add a comment on Sri Lanka. Because, I think I have a plea to the Sri Lankan government really. There are international NGOs, and of course, the UN is also in Sri Lanka, working with the government on assisting the internally-displaced people. And, of course, the Sri Lankan government is responsible because these are Sri Lankan citizens. My plea to the government is to grant more access for international humanitarian organizations to the north of the country, and also to grant access for us to do “software” activities, which includes capacity building, documentation, and protection issues. Because that is needed for a durable solution to the internal displacement. And my other plea to the Sri Lankan government is that you drafted an IDP law in 2008. And I think it would be a very important step forward if you finalize the law and then started to implement it. Thank you.

Hoge:

Would you like to respond, Ambassador? That's quite all right.

Kahona:

Thank you, Mr. Hoge. I do not wish to dominate the floor this morning, but just to address Madame Rasmusson. There are 54 NGOs working in the north at the moment. There are 11 UN agencies working in the north. There are rules which are applicable to NGOs which work in the north, which are basically that they must bring their own funding when they come into the country. They must have a program. They can't come to Sri Lanka looking for something to do. They must have a prearranged program. They must bring their own funding. We've had problems earlier with NGOs coming in and then running to the UN office and draining the UN funds for work that they suddenly discovered that they had to do. I think there are shortcomings. The IDP law has still not been enacted, but hopefully with the new parliament now sitting, it will have the time to do so. Thank you.

Hoge:

Well, I have a question if nobody else does-- Oh, good. Please.

Natasha Yacoub:

Hello, Natasha Yacoub from UNHCR. Thank you so much for the excellent presentations and also for drawing the dissimilarities and distinctions between refugees and IDPs, and in particular, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and the Ivorians who are in Abidjan, and the now close to 100,000 Ivorians who have fled into Liberia as refugees. My question is more about legal instruments. And if you could comment on the importance of the Kampala convention as a protection tool for IDPs, and whether there's hope for other similar instruments in other regions or internationally? Thanks.

Coomaraswamy:

Let me begin by saying, maybe I gave the sense of the ad-hoc-ism by saying there was no nominative framework. All I'm saying is, there have been frameworks developed by Francis Deng, as you know: the guiding principles on IDPs, which we all are guided by in the UN system and NGO community, and the Kampala convention and others. But the member states of the UN have not done anything. That's what I meant, in the sense of passing a declaration. I think I'm right, am I? They've not passed a declaration at the Human Rights Council or even at the General Assembly, they've not drafted a convention. So that nominative framework, a global nominative framework does not exist. But we are guided in the UN system by Francis Deng's principles. That's what we normally use. And my sense is that if we move toward a global understanding on how we should deal with IDPs, it would also make it easier for us on the ground, so that at every turn, we wouldn't have to fight for certain kinds of issues and rights. And the Kampala Convention is a step in the right direction.

Rasmusson: Well, the guiding principles are not legally-binding as such, but they are based on existing instruments of human rights and so forth. During the UN Summit in 2005, in the end declaration, there is an explicit reference to the guiding principles as the recognized reference for protecting internally-displaced people. And, of course, that summit declaration was signed by all the member states in the United Nations. When it comes to the Kampala convention, that we are also going to discuss a little bit later today, it's making explicit reference to the guiding principles as the basis for this binding instrument. But of course, an instrument doesn't really become binding before countries have ratified the convention, and then they also need to adopt and implement national legislation. So there are a few steps before it becomes reality.

Hoge: I have a question in the second row?

Gerry Martone: Hi, thank you. Gerry Martone with International Rescue Committee. Elisabeth, thank you once again, and congratulations on another successful report. I just have a question, in addition to the staggering numbers of displacement that you outlined in this report, there's also nine success stories, or at least nine situations that you point out where large numbers of IDPs have returned. I just want to ask you or any of the panelists, what can we learn from those situations to improve the plight of other IDPs around the world? Thank you.

Rasmusson: Well, I think the large numbers of internally-displaced people that have returned in itself is very positive. If you look at Uganda, for instance, that was up to more than 1.8 million IDPs in the north just a few years ago. Now it's just a little more than 100,000. That's positive that people are leaving the camps and going home. But I think we still have to work much more on a durable solution. And this is true for a lot of internally-displaced people in the world. They are leaving displacement situations and they are returning home, or they are being locally integrated. But there is still a lot of need for support and help in order to make the internally-displaced people getting a sustainable livelihood and protection. And there is also another thing that I want to add. Because we are all, and particularly governments, promoting return as the preferred option. And most internally-displaced people do want to go home. But there are also many, many, many who wants to integrate where they are. Some of them have been in displacement situations for decades. They feel at home where they are and they want to locally integrate. So this is something that I think we have to focus more on and help government to also support the internally-displaced people in local integration where this is where they want to.

Hoge: By the way, you mentioned in your statement that Kyrgyzstan was an exception. Is it one of the nine countries or does Kyrgyzstan offer a different story, a different lesson?

Rasmusson: Well, I think in Kyrgyzstan, what is positive is that out of the 300,000 internal-displaced people, approximately 200,000 managed to return. And of course this is very positive because it was a relatively short conflict. However, we see that there still remain 100,000 people that have not found a durable solution. And they still live in displacement. And that's also where I think the international community has to work closely with the government's assistance to ensure that they can go home again. They need support to rebuild their lives, to rebuild the infrastructure and their livelihoods. So what can we learn from it? I think we can learn from it that it's much better for internally-displaced people to be able to return quicker than to remain in protracted situations of displacement.

Hoge: Please.

Amos: Just to add one thing. I agree with absolutely everything that Elisabeth has just said. But I also think that we, on the humanitarian side, need to be much, much more conscious of the possibilities to assist and support return, to help to build early recovery activities in areas as they become much more stable. I think we can sometime take a very one-dimensional view or approach because we are seeking to recognize and support an ongoing humanitarian situation. And in doing that, we don't necessarily sufficiently recognize the places where there are opportunities. I was recently in the DRC, and it really felt to me that there were, even in the Kivus, there were parts of the Kivus where we could be promoting a different sort of model. But we were so focused on the lack of attention generally to what is happening in the DRC, and on the need to recognize ongoing humanitarian challenges, that we weren't working sufficiently closely with other partners, on building that relationship between the humanitarian early recovery and development.

Hoge: Thank you. Edie Lederer, another question? It's coming right to you.

Lederer: Ms. Rasmusson, you said in the beginning that you had difficulties in getting figures, statistics from Asia. I was wondering why, and whether this referred to specific countries? And do you have similar problems in Africa or Latin America?

Rasmusson: Well, I was mentioning Asia particularly because we don't have access to information in some countries. It's difficult, for instance, to access sufficient information in India. In India you have displacement situations in various parts of the country, particularly the Maoist groups that are causing displacement. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center has about 2,000 sources of information on the ground worldwide, including local authorities, non-governmental organizations, UN. All these sources are providing information to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. They analyze it and then also provide the sort of specific information on the internally-displaced people. But the more sources we have, the better information we get and the better understanding of the displacement situations we can have. When it comes to Africa, there are countries where we don't have enough information because we don't have access for security reasons. So if we're not there, if nobody's there, seeing the IDPs and talking to them and getting information about their situation, we cannot process it and make the proper analysis.

Lederer: So would the implication be that the final number that you have now is probably understated?

Rasmusson: In some countries, yes. I think we can say that the numbers are understated, absolutely. I would also very much draw your attention to the report. Because you will find that after each region, it's divided into regions or continents. And you have an overall analysis of a continent, for instance, Africa. Then you have country pages with specific country information. And then you have a statistics table where the different number of internally-displaced people for each country is written. And you will see that some countries have different numbers because the sources don't agree with each other, or they count the IDPs differently.

If you look at Colombia, just to take one very concrete example, CODHES, which is an NGO that has been collecting IDP information in Colombia since 1985, they are estimating the number to approximately 5 million. The government of Colombia started recording IDPs ten years ago. So, of course, their number is

lower. It's around a little more than 3 million. And, also, the government is only recognizing IDPs that have been registered. And they don't recognize IDPs that have been displaced because of, you could say, development projects. So there are differences in the way the numbers are posted so to say. But it's explained in the report. Thank you.

Hoge: We have time for one last question, my colleague Jeremie.

Jeremie Labbe: Good morning, Jeremie Labbe from the International Peace Institute. First of all, I would like to express my thanks to all the panelists for their brilliant observations and their comments. I have a question, primarily for Elisabeth Rasmusson. I know that the work of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center focuses on the situation of displaced people induced by conflict. But still, what do we know of IDPs driven out of their homes by natural disasters? Is it part of the plans of IDMC to study further this issue? And what do we know about the extent of this phenomenon in comparison to conflict-induced IDPs? Thank you.

Rasmusson: Well, thank you very much. You're absolutely right. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center is focusing on conflict-induced displacement. However, the center has done a tremendous job and is now working also on natural disaster induced displacement. In 2009, the center, together with OCHA, gave out the report that confirmed that just in 2008, more than 20 million people were displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters. So what we know is that the number of displaced people because of natural disasters, are probably much higher than the number of conflict-induced. However, they are not generally so protracted, so people can go home quicker. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center has staff particularly looking at natural disaster induced displacement, and have not started to monitor it globally, but are in the process of finding how should the IDMC find its niche, its complementary to other organizations that are collecting data on displacement linked to natural disasters. So it's a work in progress. That's the answer.

Hoge: Being able to launch this report, having the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, whoever he or she may be, has become a tradition at IPI, which we certainly intend to continue. Thank you all for coming. And, panelists, thank you in particular for living within these rather harsh timing structures this morning.