Framing note: Thematic session I – Intergovernmental frameworks and institutions of coordination and cooperation to improve local resilience to the refugee crisis

Overview

Urban displacement situations involving large scale and protracted crises affecting refugees, IDPs and local communities are a growing challenge. This means that along with responding to the current crises, there is an important element in preparing for the future through strengthening local resilience. Because of the recognition of the longer-term impacts of forced displacement, there is a necessary shifting from a humanitarian to a development perspective. This shift requires greater capacity and alignment at the national and local government level to address elements of local resilience such as infrastructure, service delivery, livelihoods, social cohesion and Disaster Risk Reduction. The new responsibilities for delivering services in local governments affected by forced displacement require institutional foundations for improving localities’ resilience.

With the need to establish local systems for urban service provisions, different national systems of administration distribute the responsibilities to fulfill public duties among governmental authorities at various levels. Defining the roles and responsibilities for regional or local level planning, operational management and for the financing of infrastructures and service provision become more important as central administration inevitably leaves more responsibilities to lower-level authorities.

To secure the effectiveness and impact of local governments’ response to the challenges of delivering services in areas impacted by refugees/displaced people, several steps are required in the structuring of the government systems:

- Developing sustainable financing instruments at national and local level on how to meet common objectives of delivering services and enhancing resilience.
- Greater clarity on how to manage potential trade-offs between effective service delivery by NGOs and other Non-State Providers, and institutional building of local and central governments.
- Agreement on practical options to decrease fragmentation (of funding mechanisms and reporting and accounting rules and regulations), and increase government and local governments participation and coordination in the governance of funds.
- Better management of expectations about what can be delivered through national and local funding, and acceptance of the costs associated with transition situations.
Guiding Questions for Working Group Sessions:

- How local governments are technically prepared to face the challenge of expanding service delivery in protracted crises? What kind of institutional and capacity building is necessary to allow local governments to perform?
- What are good practices on how decentralization and participation can lead to more resilience and improved services at the local level?
- How do local councils plan for financing expanding service delivery? How are investments and operational cost financed?
- How can local governments be supported to sustain service delivery in terms of operational and maintenance costs?
- What are the lessons of improved systems of service delivery? Is there evidence of greater resilience at the municipal level? How do local councils plan for expanding service delivery? How are investments and operational cost financed?

Working Group I.1: Local governments at the forefront of strengthening local resilience: planning and implementing resilience policies at the local level

- Presentation: Tony Sfeir, Chief Resilience Officer, Municipality of Byblos, Lebanon
- Discussant: Salam Badreddine, Union of municipalities of Sahel Zahrani, Lebanon
- Q&A and Open Discussion

- Moderator: Samer Saliba, Urban Response Learning Manager, International Rescue Committee

Working Group I.2: Central and local government collaborations to improve services to refugees and migrants

- Presentation: Mehmet Abdullah Aksoy, Head of Health and Social Services Department, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey
- Discussant: Rodopi Panidou, Head of Legal Affairs, City of Offenbach am Main, Germany
- Q&A and Open Discussion

- Moderator: Stephen Commins, Associate Director, Global Public Affairs, Luskin School of Public Affairs, University of California

Working Group I.3: Developing sustainable financing for the provision of municipal services directed to refugees and citizens

- Presentation: Akram Abu Allan, Mayor of Thahiriya, Hebron Governorate, Palestinian Territories
- Discussant: Issam El Hadi, Mayor of Qaleet Al Istiklal, Lebanon
- Q&A and Open Discussion

- Moderator: Philip Bottern, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank

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