

Agenda of the Conference on Internal Displacement in Asia

Bangkok, Thailand, February 22-24, 2000

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Chuchai Kasemsarn, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Thailand (opening statement)

Suraphol Wirurak, Vice President, University of Chulalongkorn, Bangkok

Somchai Homla-Or, Secretary-General, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)

Steinar Sorlie, Secretary-General, Norwegian Refugee Council, on behalf of international non-governmental sponsors: The Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement, Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project, and U.S. Committee for Refugees

Irene Khan, Deputy Director, Department of International Protection, UNHCR

Francis M. Deng, Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and Co-Director, Project on Internal Displacement, The Brookings Institution

Moderator: *Janvier de Riedmatten*, UNHCR Bangkok

Internal Displacement: A Global Overview

In 1992, at the request of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Secretary-General appointed a representative on internally displaced persons. This session provides an overview of the problem worldwide and examines the response of the international community, including institutional arrangements, country visits and the development of a legal framework.

Moderator: *Dr. Supang Chantavanich*, Director, Institute of Asian Studies, Asian Research Center for Migration, University of Chulalongkorn (Thailand)

Presentation: *Francis M. Deng*, Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and Co-Director, Project on Internal Displacement, The Brookings Institution

Introduction to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

In 1998, the first international standards for internally displaced persons were presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights. Entitled the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Commission, Economic and Social Council and General Assembly have acknowledged them, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has endorsed them, and they are being widely disseminated by the UN. Regional organizations in Africa, Europe and the Americas have also acknowledged them, as have many NGOs. This session reviews their origin and content, and discusses the roles and responsibilities of states, regional organizations, UN agencies and NGOs in the application of the Principles.

Moderator: *Mario Gomez*, Lecturer in Public Law, University of Colombo (Sri Lanka)

Presentations: *Walter Kalin*, Professor of Constitutional and International Law, University of Bern (Switzerland)

Roberta Cohen, Co-Director, Project on Internal Displacement, The Brookings Institution (Washington, DC)

Regional Patterns and Trends

This session seeks to identify the overall trends in internal displacement in Asia by focusing on developments in the sub-regions. It examines the causes of displacement, the numbers of those displaced, and the impact of displacement on communities, countries and regions with a view to identifying regional patterns.

Moderator: *Hiram Ruiz*, Senior Policy Analyst, U.S. Committee for Refugees

Presentations: South Asia: *Tapan Bose*, Secretary-General, South Asia Forum for Human Rights (Nepal)

Southeast Asia: *Evelyn Balais Serrano*, Forum Asia (Thailand)

Patterns of Displacement: Responsibilities and Consequences: *Arjuna Aluwihare* (Sri Lanka) Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and Commissioner, Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission

Application of the Guiding Principles: Country Case Studies

Protection from Displacement (Principles 5-9)

Many situations of displacement could be avoided or at least minimized. This session explores protection against arbitrary displacement. It focuses on the two main forms of displacement in Asia: development-induced displacement; and displacement caused by conflict and human rights violations. The extent to which protection and human rights concerns enter into both cases is explored. Also examined will be the role the international community can play to help prevent or mitigate displacement in both cases.

Development-Induced Displacement

Moderator: *Boonthan T. Verawongse*, Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD, Thailand)

- Case Study: China: Three Gorges Dam
Presentation: *Dai Qing*, author (China)

- Case Study: Philippines
Presentation: *Lourdes F. Go-Zurbano*, Executive Director, Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (Philippines)
- Case Study: Thailand
Presentation: *Bantorn Ondam*, ACFOD (Thailand)

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Application of the Guiding Principles in Asia (continued)

Displacement Caused by Conflict and Human Rights Violations

Moderator: *C. R. Abrar*, Coordinator, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit and Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka (Bangladesh)

- Case Study: East Timor and Indonesia
Presentations: *Father Barreto*, Caritas-Dili (East Timor)
Agung Ayu Ratih, Jakarta Social Institute (Indonesia)
- Case Study: Pakistan
Presentation: *Syed Sikander Mehdi*, Chairman, Department of International Relations, University of Karachi (Pakistan)

Protection During Displacement (Principles 10-23)

In situations of conflict, IDPs need both humanitarian relief (food, medicine, and shelter) and the protection of their civil and political rights and personal safety. Children have special needs for protection against forced recruitment and women for protection against sexual assault. The case studies in this session focus on ways to integrate protection and human rights into relief operations, the difficulties encountered in doing so, and the consequences of being unable to do so.

Moderator: *Francis Amar*, Head of International Organizations Division, ICRC (Geneva)

- Integrating Protection with Assistance: The Case of Sri Lanka
Presentation: *Bo Schack*, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR (Sri Lanka)
Commentator: *Jeevan Thiagarajah*, Executive Director, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (Sri Lanka)
- Relief without Protection: The Case of North Korea
Presentations: *Erica Kang*, Co-ordinator of International Affairs, Good Friends: Center for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees, North Korea (Korea, Republic of - South)
Courtland Robinson, Center for Refugee and Disaster Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (USA)

- Striving Towards International Standards of Protection: The Case of Afghanistan

This case study will focus on methods of translating international standards of protection, human rights and gender into operational activities.

Moderator: *Michael Sackett*, World Food Programme (Afghanistan)

Presentation: *Marcus J. Dolder*, Head of ICRC Delegation (Afghanistan)

Commentators: *Ahmad Fahim Hakim*, Cooperation for Peace and Unity (Afghanistan)

Judy Benjamin, Senior Technical Advisor, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (New York)

Principles Relating To Humanitarian Assistance (Principles 24-27)

Gaining access to internally displaced populations is often a major problem for international organizations and NGOs trying to deliver humanitarian assistance. It requires negotiations with governments as well as non-state actors, dealing with issues of sovereignty, and the need to reach persons on all sides of conflict lines.

Moderator: *Irene Khan*, Deputy Director, Department of International Protection, UNHCR (Geneva)

- Negotiating Access: India's Northeast
Presentation: *Subir Bhaumik*, Eastern India Correspondent, BBC (Calcutta, India)
- Dealing with Sovereignty: Myanmar (Burma)
Presentation: *Jack Dunford*, Director, Burmese Border Consortium (Thailand)
Commentators: *Aung Htoo*, Secretary-General, Burma Lawyers Council (Thailand)
Steven Lanjouw, Burmese Ethnic Research Group (Thailand)

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Principles Relating To Return, Resettlement, and Reintegration (Principles 28-30)

Voluntary and safe returns or resettlement, in which returnees have both security and the means to reestablish themselves in their areas of origin, are critical issues confronting displaced populations in the return, resettlement and reintegration phase. The next three sessions discuss the right to return, the issue of compensation for lost property and land, and strategies for promoting sustainable returns.

Moderator: *Hisham Harun Hashim*, Red Crescent Society (Malaysia)

- Conditions Governing the Right to Return
Presentation: *Gary Risser*, Human Rights Watch/Asia
Commentator: *Latt Ky*, ADHOC (Cambodia)

- Compensation, Land and Property Issues, and Reintegration Strategies
Moderator: *Dev Ratna Dhakwa*, Secretary-General, Red Cross Society (Nepal)
Presentations: *Shaun Williams*, Coordinator, Land Study Project, Oxfam (Cambodia)
Jamil H. Chowdhury, General Manager, Programme for Research on Poverty Alleviation, Grameen Trust, Grameen Bank (Bangladesh) (on impact of microcredit, especially for women)

Developing a Plan of Action at the National and Regional Levels

This session identifies practical ways to raise awareness to situations of internal displacement through the development of national machinery and legislation; training of government officials, police and military; empowerment of local populations; building regional constituencies and organizations; engaging academic institutions; promoting joint advocacy.

Moderator: *Somchai Homla-Or*, Secretary-General, Forum Asia

Panel: *Koesparmono Irsan*, Human Rights Commission (Indonesia)
Mercedes V. Contreras-Danenberg, Commission on Human Rights (Philippines) (on role of national human rights commissions)
Mrinal Kanti Chakma, General Secretary, Chittagong Hill Tracts Displaced Peoples' Organisation (India) (on empowering IDPs)
I.A. Rehman, Human Rights Commission (Pakistan) (on role of NGOs)
Marc Vincent, Global IDP Survey/Norwegian Refugee Council (on documentation networks)
Omprakash Mishra, Center for Refugee Studies, Jadavpur University (India) (on role of academic institutions)

Conference Conclusions and Recommendations

This session will bring together the major conclusions and recommendations reached during the sessions.

Moderator/Rapporteur: *Wei Ming Lim*, Senior Regional Legal Adviser, Asia Bureau, UNHCR

Co-rapporteurs: *Sivanka Dhanapala*, Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General, and *Steven Lanjouw*, Burmese Ethnic Research Group

Concluding Remarks

Supang Chantanavich, University of Chulalongkorn

Francis M. Deng, Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and Co-Director, Project on Internal Displacement, The Brookings Institution