

WHO Statement

Intersessional Seminar for the implementation of the Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons 2018–2020

Twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

29 October 2020

Thank you, Mr / Madam Chair for providing the floor to the World Health Organization. [ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED]

In April this year, we all heard the Secretary-General say that while "the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency, it is far more than that. It is an economic crisis. A social crisis. And a human crisis that is fast becoming a human rights crisis."

Today, we are slowly getting a better picture of the human rights implications of this pandemic. The public health crisis caused by COVID-19 disproportionately affects people and communities who are already in vulnerable and marginalized situations, such as migrants, refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). There are risks for populations confined to camps and informal settlements or living in areas with overcrowding, poor sanitation, and overstretched or inaccessible health services.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement outline important human rights protections and concretely refer to health in many places. There is a close interconnection between human rights protection and promotion of IDPs and their health outcomes.

- First, many human rights violations that IDPs may experience have a direct and negative impact on their health.
- Second, economic and social rights, such as the right to education, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to decent work, and a safe and healthy working environment are directly related to IDPs health and well-being.

- A third interconnection is an importance of taking a rights-based approach in developing, implementing and evaluating health policies and health systems to reflect the needs and concerns of the people that these systems serve. IDPs have the right to participate in developing the health systems that deliver their health care; they have the right to evidence-based health information; and the right to receive health care without discrimination and respect for their privacy and confidentiality equal terms with others.

WHO works to integrate public health concerns in all aspects of population movements, including strengthening the protection and promotion of migrants, refugees, and IDPs' health rights. WHO's commitment to these population groups' health was recognized by WHO Member States in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, which provides WHO's a strategic vision for the period 2019–2023: achieve universal health coverage, address health emergencies and promote healthier populations.

WHO is committed to agreed policies and interventions to promote and secure mobile populations' health rights, as described in the WHO Global Action Plan agreed at the Seventy-Second Health Assembly in 2019 by the Member States. The Global Action Plan was developed in the context of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is consistent with both the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

WHO is committed to addressing these population groups' health and well-being inclusively and comprehensively as part of a holistic approach to address the overall population's health needs.