

Outcome Statement

Conference on Internal Displacement due to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji, 3 May 2011

Having met at the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat in Suva, Fiji, on 3 May 2011, in the context of the Conference on Internal Displacement due to Natural Disasters and Climate Change organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Brookings Institution, and chaired by Forum Secretary-General Tuiloma Neroni Slade, the participants, including government officials, diplomats, academics, representatives of regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations Organizations from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu jointly adopted the following Outcome Statement in which they:

- Recognize that natural disasters are recurrent events in the Pacific and together with effects of climate change are causing internal displacement across the Pacific;
- Note the experiences that show that persons displaced are particularly vulnerable to threats such as security and physical integrity, inadequate and insecure shelter, loss of contacts with children and family members, health issues including communicable and non-communicable diseases, psycho-social stress and mental health, sexual and gender-based violence, and discrimination in aid distribution. When prolonged these situations also have clear impacts on access to health, adequate food, water and sanitation, education, employment or public services, and housing, land and property;
- Further note that situations of internal displacement pose a number of interrelated challenges for the national authorities and aid organizations in the protection of internally displaced persons and the responses provided. These relate to, inter alia, awareness of and capacity to apply standards and principles; consultation with affected communities, groups and individuals; co-existence with host-communities; information-sharing among and between stakeholders; provisions of health care services, education and livelihoods; availability and access to complaint and response systems; and protection against violence, including gender-based violence;
- Reaffirm that all United Nations Members States have committed themselves to the human rights standards and principles set out in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with responsibility to ensure human rights protection for all, boys, girls, men and women, on their territory, including those who are displaced by natural disasters;
- Note with appreciation that a number of comprehensive and complementary guidelines have been developed to outline the standards and principles and provide all

stakeholders with a valuable framework for the protection of internally displaced persons. Such guidelines are: the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*; the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*; and the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters*, and are based upon and consistent with international human rights law;

- Reaffirm that in line with commitments under the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, national governments and local authorities have the primary responsibility to address and find solutions to internal displacement in line with international standards, including through laws, policies, strategies and practice. In addition, international donors and organizations working with humanitarian relief and development issues have a role to play in promoting and protecting human rights in the context of their efforts to assist internally displaced persons;
- Emphasize the need to systematically collect data on and sustain monitoring of situations of internal displacement and recovery. Adequate preparedness and planning measures require reliable information to build up and maintain knowledge on who is displaced, or who is at risk of displacement, and their likely needs for assistance and protection. Monitoring helps ensure that people in protracted situations of displacement are kept visible, and not forgotten or ignored, especially as the risks they are exposed to may worsen the longer they are displaced.
- Affirm that durable solutions to internal displacement can be achieved through: sustainable reintegration at the place of origin i.e. return; sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons have found refuge; and sustainable integration in another part of the country i.e. resettlement. Further recognize that achieving durable solutions to end displacement requires planning, capacity and resources and failure to meet these can lead to further human rights issues, such as forced return and violence, including the risk of losing lives;
- Further recognize that discrimination, and in particular discrimination against women, needs to be addressed in all stages of preparedness and response to, and early recovery of situations of internal displacement. Traditional structures, knowledge and practice can be used and further built on but steps need also to be taken to ensure that the needs of all men, women, girls and boys are taken into account. Similarly, steps need to be taken in order to ensure that individuals and groups with special needs or who are marginalized are able to effectively participate and are consulted.