

DRAFT CONCEPT/PROGRAMME NOTE

**Future protection challenges
- responding to conflict and forced displacement**

Date and format:

High-level half day Symposium on 4 June 2008, 09:00 -12:00. The Symposium will be opened by Danish Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tørnæs. Keynote speech by UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

Background:

Conflicts that take place within states, in the form of civil wars, armed insurrections, violent secessionist movements and other internal strife have dominated the conflict agenda during the past few decades. However, there are indications that the root causes of conflict are changing and that population displacement is becoming more complex in nature.

This symposium will consider how the factors generating conflict may evolve over the next 5-10 years, what that implies for the nature of forced displacement, and how the international community should respond to resulting future protection challenges.

Programme

The symposium will assess the challenges to protection in an era where basic humanitarian principles seem threatened, displacement is becoming more and more complex, in terms of both causes and characteristics, and humanitarian access appears as difficult as ever.. This broad topic will be introduced by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Antonio Guterres, who will discuss questions such as:

- What are the protection challenges to be addressed the next decade?
- With the growing complexity of displacement and the problems related to humanitarian access in mind, how can and will UNHCR and other humanitarian actors respond to forced displacement and resulting protection needs in the next 5-10 years?

A panel that includes Mr. Andreas Kamm, Peter Walker and James Darcy will engage in a debate with Mr. Guterres on future protection challenges.

The second part of the symposium will focus on the root causes and dynamics of future conflicts and possible ways of addressing these. The role of key drivers of conflict and displacement will be discussed, such as

- Scarcity of natural resources, caused by climate change and other factors;

Events related to Revision of Denmark's Strategy for Humanitarian Aid

- The role of identity-related factors such as religion, ethnicity, gender, culture, heritage history and language
- Problems related to humanitarian access arising out of conflicts between the international community and states that fail to comply with international law and standards

The impact of climate change puts additional pressure on already scarce natural resources and this is likely to have a particularly detrimental effect on the poorest communities around the world. Many of these communities are already affected by conflict and instability and thus face a dual risk. The conflict in Darfur is one of several examples of this.

Increasingly, conflicts are rooted in ideas of human identity. Identity-related factors, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, culture, heritage, history and language combined with perceived imbalance in distribution of resources lead to deep-rooted conflict. The inherent differences become clear when one group is deprived the resources that others have access to or when a group is accused of threatening others one way or another.

These developments present the humanitarian community with challenges of growing complexity. This is compounded by the emergence of severe problems related to humanitarian access as reflected, for instance, in Darfur, Puntland and most recently in cyclone affected Burma – although not a conflict situation the challenges related to humanitarian access and not being able to respond to the needs of displaced populations.

Partners and co-hosts:

Danish Refugee Council and UNHCR

Possible panelists and moderators:

Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation
Antonio Guterres, High Commissioner for Refugees
Andreas Kamm, Secretary General, Danish Refugee Council
James Darcy, ODI
Peter Walker, Tufts
ICG

Participants: UNHCR and other UN agencies

International humanitarian organisations
DIIS
HCG members
Danida's Advisory Board
Foreign Relations Committee

Events related to Revision of Denmark's Strategy for Humanitarian Aid

Other relevant civil society partners
The wider public