DRAFT REGIONAL EXPERT CONSULTATION REPORT

New Approaches and Policy Options for Durable Solutions in Disaster Displacement Contexts

Latin America and the Caribbean Consultation

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and the
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1. Background and Purpose of the Consultation

Disasters and the adverse effects of climate change continue to result in small- and large-scale displacement across the world. While many movements take the form of short-term, life-saving evacuations, a significant number of people remain displaced for months or years, often without access to the conditions necessary to rebuild their lives in a safe, dignified and sustainable manner. In 2025, 29.9 million internal displacements associated with disasters were recorded globally, while an estimated 13.6 million people remained displaced at the end of the year[1]. Despite the magnitude of the issue, the duration and longer-term consequences of disaster displacement remain insufficiently documented. Data collection frequently ends shortly after an emergency, making it difficult to determine how many people remain displaced, where they are living, what barriers they face, and whether they have achieved a durable solution.

Protracted disaster displacement cannot be explained solely by the severity of the triggering hazard or the extent of physical damage. Evidence increasingly shows that displacement outcomes are also shaped by access to adequate housing, land and secure tenure, livelihoods, essential services, social protection, institutional capacity, community participation and exposure to repeated hazards. These factors often determine whether displacement is resolved within a relatively short period or becomes a prolonged condition of material, legal and protection-related vulnerability.

Against this background, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), in collaboration with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), organized the Regional Expert Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean on "*New Approaches and Policy Options for Durable Solutions in Disaster Displacement Contexts*". The Consultation took place on 22 and 23 July 2026 in Panama City, Panama.

The Consultation was organized under the broader PDD project "*New Approaches and Policy Options for Durable Solutions in Disaster Displacement Contexts*", funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The project seeks to develop recommendations on new approaches and policy options for durable solutions in disaster displacement contexts. IDMC partnered with PDD for the Consultation as part of its project "*Enhancing prevention, risk reduction and response to disaster and climate-related displacement worldwide*" funded by the EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA). The project aims to reduce displacement risks and impacts through improved data and evidence, national and regional capacity strengthening and dialogues. The Consultation was generously funded and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the European Union (EU), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

[1] See IDMC's flagship report Global Report on Internal Displacement 2026 (GRID) https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2026/

The discussions were informed by two complementary draft background documents. The first draft, "*Disaster and Climate Change Related Internal Displacement: From Crisis Management to Climate Resilient Development Solutions*", sets out a policy-oriented framework for moving beyond short-term crisis management towards government-led, rights-based and climate-resilient development solutions (Hereinafter Policy Paper). The second draft, "*Protracted Disaster Displacement: A Global Review of the State of Knowledge*" (Hereinafter Global Study), jointly developed by PDD and IDMC, examines the available evidence on the scale, drivers and consequences of protracted disaster displacement, as well as the factors that enable or hinder durable solutions.

The two documents provided different but complementary information for the Consultation. The Global Study supported the discussion by examining what is currently known, where evidence remains limited, and why disaster displacement becomes protracted. The Policy Paper provided a strategic framework for discussing what needs to change, which actors need to be involved, what tools and financing options may be required, and how durable solutions can be integrated into national development, climate action and disaster risk reduction planning processes.

The Consultation therefore served as a space for expert dialogue and aimed to bring together different forms of expertise and experience to test global findings against regional realities and to identify concrete pathways for moving from evidence and recommendations towards implementation.

2. Consultation Format and Participation

Participants included government officials, representatives of international and regional organizations, humanitarian and development practitioners, academics, legal experts, civil society representatives and specialists working on disaster risk reduction, climate change, internal displacement, human mobility, housing, planned relocation, data, protection and durable solutions.

The meeting was designed to combine policy, operational, academic, legal and community-oriented perspectives. Participants were therefore encouraged to contribute not only from their institutional mandates, but also from their practical experience of responding to displacement, supporting affected communities, developing policies, producing evidence or implementing programmes.

The Consultation started with opening remarks from representatives of the PDD, Delegation of the European Union in Panama and GIZ. Then, a first substantive block focused on data, trends and the current state of knowledge. It included presentations on disaster displacement in Latin America and the Caribbean, existing data gaps, the production of harmonized statistics, and the main findings of the Global Study on protracted disaster displacement. The subsequent session examined why displacement becomes protracted in disaster and climate change contexts. Participants discussed the

interaction between housing, land, secure tenure, livelihoods, essential services, protection, institutional capacity, recurrent exposure to hazards and pre-existing inequalities.

An exchange of experiences then focused on the concept of “solutions from the start”. This session examined how decisions made during humanitarian response and early recovery can either support or undermine longer-term solutions. Participants reflected on concrete experiences, recurring shortcomings and lessons for connecting immediate assistance and response with recovery, development and resilience.

The thematic group work focused on the shift from humanitarian responses towards longer-term development approaches. Participants discussed issues such as 1) governance and institutional arrangements; 2) government leadership and community participation; 3) dimensions such as housing, livelihoods, documentation and services; and 4) the role of innovative and diversified financing.

The second day concentrated on the meaning and practical requirements of durable solutions. A plenary discussion explored the criteria that should be used to determine whether solutions to displacement have been found. Participants emphasized that the end of shelter assistance, physical return or the provision of housing cannot, on their own, be considered sufficient indicators of a durable solution. A further expert dialogue examined how preliminary recommendations could be translated into implementation. Through an interactive exercise, participants reflected on which recommendations were most feasible, which actors should lead their implementation, what capacities and resources would be required, what incentives could encourage action, and what political, institutional, financial or operational obstacles would need to be addressed.

The final substantive sessions identified regional and international processes that could provide entry points for follow-up. Participants considered how the Consultation’s findings could contribute to climate action, disaster risk reduction, development planning, regional mobility and protection processes, statistical cooperation, financing discussions and other relevant policy spaces.

Throughout the Consultation, facilitators sought to move the discussion from broad principles towards concrete recommendations. Presentations were intentionally kept short, allowing sufficient time for interaction, comparison of experiences and collective reflection. The group exercises were structured to identify not only challenges, but also enabling conditions, responsible actors, implementation barriers and possible pathways for follow-up.

The Consultation did not seek to produce a ‘negotiated’ outcome document. Instead, it generated substantive inputs, recommendations and practical considerations to be consolidated in this report and used to inform the next stages of the project.

3. Framing the Evidence: What We Know and What We Still Do Not Know

The first substantive block of the Consultation established the global and regional evidence base for the discussions that followed. The session examined the scale and characteristics of internal disaster displacement in 2025, recent trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, existing limitations in data collection, and examples of progress in national statistical and policy frameworks.

3.1. "Measuring" internal displacement

At the outset, the speaker from IDMC emphasized the importance of distinguishing between two related but different measurements. The number of **internal displacements** refers to the number of movements recorded during a given year. The same person may be displaced more than once and therefore counted several times. The number of **internally displaced persons**, by contrast, refers to the estimated number of people who remain in a situation of internal displacement at the end of the year.

This distinction was particularly relevant for the aims of the Consultation. Figures on movements help demonstrate the frequency and scale of displacement associated with disasters, including preventive evacuations. However, they do not show how many people remain displaced after the immediate emergency, how long their displacement lasts, or whether they have achieved a durable solution.

Participants were reminded that the end of data collection should not be interpreted as the end of displacement. In many disaster situations, reporting is concentrated in the first days or weeks following an event. People who remain displaced later may no longer be visible in disaster statistics, even though they continue to face challenges related to housing, land, livelihoods, services, documentation or protection.

3.2. Disaster displacement in the Americas

More than 4.3 million disaster displacements were recorded in the Americas in 2025. This represented approximately one third of the exceptionally high figure recorded in the region in 2024. At least 52 per cent of the disaster movements recorded in 2025 were preventive evacuations, particularly in Chile and Cuba. This highlighted the essential role of preparedness, early warning and coordinated evacuation in protecting lives.

Chile provided a notable example. Approximately 1.5 million preventive evacuations were undertaken following tsunami alerts generated by a magnitude 8.8 earthquake in Russia. The anticipated waves were not as high as initially feared, and most people were able to return quickly. The case demonstrated that a large displacement figure may reflect effective anticipatory action rather than a failure of protection.

At the same time, the regional data showed that rapid return cannot be assumed in every context. Approximately 360,000 people remained displaced by disasters in the Americas at the end of 2025. Most were in Jamaica following Hurricane Melissa.

3.3. Data sources and regional capacity

The presentation by IDMC showed that national governments are the principal producers of disaster displacement information in Latin America and the Caribbean. Approximately 99.4 per cent of the sources used by IDMC in the region during 2025 came from government institutions, and 96.9 per cent came specifically from national or regional disaster management authorities. This reliance on government data represents both an opportunity and a challenge. National institutions already collect significant amounts of information during emergencies, but these systems are not always designed to follow displaced populations over time. They may count evacuations, shelter occupancy or damaged homes without capturing when people return, where they relocate, whether they experience secondary displacement, or what barriers prevent them from achieving durable solutions.

Several promising national practices were highlighted:

- Brazil's Integrated Disaster Information System (SEDEC/S2iD) has strengthened coordination, transparency and accessibility in the national collection of disaster impact data.
- Uruguay's National Emergency System (SINAE) database includes specific indicators related to displacement.
- Ecuador's National Secretariat for Risk Management (SNGRE) database records information on the duration of stays in emergency shelters.
- National statistical institutes in Guatemala and Honduras have included survey questions intended to identify people internally displaced by conflict, violence or disasters.

These examples demonstrate that useful building blocks already exist within the region. The challenge is to strengthen interoperability, harmonization, disaggregation and longitudinal monitoring, while ensuring that data are used to inform policy and programme decisions.

The discussion on harmonized statistics was particularly relevant because national systems often apply different definitions, units of measurement and reporting periods. Greater harmonization could improve comparability while still allowing countries to adapt data systems to their institutional and territorial contexts.

3.4 The political and institutional dimensions of data

The plenary discussion emphasized that data collection should not be understood only as a technical or methodological exercise. Decisions about whether, what and how to measure displacement are also political. Sustained progress therefore requires institutional ownership, intersectoral cooperation and long-term support for national and local data ecosystems.

> *"...Con relación a la colecta de data, podría caerse en la tentación de pensarla estrictamente en un tema metodológico, como un tema de capacidad técnica; cuando en realidad la colecta de data es un elemento tremendamente político [...] la decisión de medir las trayectorias del desplazamiento puede ser en muchos casos una decisión política..."* ***- Luis Doñas, SENAPRED, Chile.***

IDMC explained that regional data are obtained through direct cooperation with governments, publicly available databases, official bulletins and disaster management reports. Because few countries use a specific indicator for displaced persons, information on evacuations, people in shelters and uninhabitable housing are frequently used as a proxy and subsequently verified with national authorities.

Participants noted, however, that housing damage and evacuation figures reveal little about displacement duration or the protection needs or vulnerabilities people face over time. One proposed avenue was to incorporate displacement indicators into existing administrative systems, including population, health and social protection registries. This could make displaced populations more visible and support longitudinal monitoring of access to services, livelihoods and progress towards durable solutions.

IDMC also presented during this session the recently published regional practical guide for production of harmonized statistics on forced displacement and migration, developed by UNHCR, IOM, JIPS and regional statistical offices and endorsed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL)[2]. The discussion highlighted the value of this guide which seeks to support more consistent and comparable statistical production on refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless populations across the region, by aligning national data collection with international standards by the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS).

3.5. Emerging policy and evidence developments

[2] Available here: https://cea.cepal.org/13/es/documentos/guia-practica-la-produccion-estadisticas-armonizadas-desplazamiento-forzado-migracion

The presentations in the session highlighted several recent policy and research developments that demonstrate growing recognition of disaster displacement in the region. Colombia adopted legislation specifically addressing internal displacement associated with disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, and establishing a dedicated registry for environmentally displaced people[3]. The development builds on the country's extensive legal and institutional experience in responding to conflict-related internal displacement and represents an important regional effective practice.

Panama has advanced the incorporation of planned relocation into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policy. The country also published its first report on climate mobility, strengthening the evidence base for understanding the links between climate change and human mobility and for designing future public policies[4].

Mexico developed its first national assessment of internal displacement associated with climate change and disasters[5]. The study represented a significant step towards recognizing disaster displacement as an issue requiring specific analysis, evidence and public policy responses.

These examples showed that the region is not starting from zero. Important data systems, assessments, legal developments and policy initiatives already exist. However, they remain uneven across countries and are not yet part of a coherent regional architecture for measuring, preventing and addressing protracted disaster displacement.

3.6. Key issues emerging from the evidence

Several conclusions from the framing sessions shaped the subsequent discussions:

- High numbers of displacement movements do not necessarily mean that displacement has become protracted, particularly when movements result from preventive evacuations.
- Conversely, a relatively modest number of initial movements may lead to serious and prolonged displacement when housing, livelihoods and infrastructure cannot be restored.
- Regional data systems remain considerably stronger at measuring initial movements than at monitoring displacement duration and progress towards durable solutions.

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[3] Ley 2577 2026 available here: https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2026/151611
[4] Ministerio de Ambiente (2026). *Informe sobre la situación de movilidad climática en Panamá.* https://transparencia-climatica.miambiente.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Informe-sobre-la-situación-de-movilidad-climática-en-Panamá-Ab-2026.pdf
[5] Secretaría de Gobernación, CONAPO, ACNUR (2026). *Diagnóstico nacional sobre el desplazamiento forzado interno por cambio climático y desastres en México*. https://www.gob.mx/conapo/documentos/diagnostico-nacional-sobre-el-desplazamiento-forzado-interno-por-cambio-climatico-y-desastres-en-mexico

- Evidence of how many people remain displaced a few months, one year or even longer after a disaster is still scarce, due to several methodological limitations.
- Housing damage is an important indicator, but it cannot by itself explain whether people will remain displaced.
- National disaster management authorities are central to data production, but cooperation with statistical institutes, sectoral ministries, local authorities and affected communities is also required.
- Existing examples from the region provide a foundation for better data systems, more specific legal frameworks and stronger policy responses.
- Data collection should ultimately support decisions. Better statistics are not an end in themselves, but a tool for identifying who remains displaced, understanding the barriers they face and directing resources towards sustainable solutions.

The evidence presented during this first block therefore provided a bridge to the next question addressed by the consultation: why do some displacement situations end relatively quickly, while others become prolonged and increasingly difficult to resolve?

4. Why Disaster Displacement Becomes Protracted in Latin America and the Caribbean

The first panel examined why some disaster displacement situations are resolved relatively quickly while others persist for months or years. Contributions from Colombia, Brazil and the Caribbean showed that prolonged displacement rarely results from a single factor. It emerges through the interaction of the natural hazard with structural inequality, housing and livelihood losses, weak institutional capacity, insufficient protection and continued exposure to risk.

Physical damage may explain why displacement begins, but it does not fully explain its duration. Displacement becomes protracted when emergency measures are not followed by timely recovery, when affected persons disappear from official monitoring, or when available solutions fail to restore the conditions required for a safe, dignified and autonomous life.

4.1. Cumulative and unequal displacement trajectories

Participants described protracted displacement as a cumulative process. The longer people remain displaced, the more difficult it may become to recover assets, restore income, maintain family and community networks and secure adequate housing and services. Repeated movements and successive disasters may further deepen these losses.

Pre-existing poverty, inequality, violence, exclusion and insecure tenure strongly influence displacement outcomes. Households with limited savings, documentation or access to social protection generally face greater obstacles to recovery. Migrants, refugees, Indigenous peoples and traditional communities may experience additional difficulties

accessing assistance, regularizing their situation or preserving culturally and territorially based ways of life.

The 2024 floods in southern Brazil illustrated how displaced populations may gradually become less visible once the emergency phase ends, even when some households remain in temporary or precarious conditions. Participants also noted that communities affected by one disaster may be exposed again before recovery is complete, producing secondary displacement and further losses.

The Colombian contribution similarly emphasized the limited knowledge available about prolonged disaster and environmentally related displacement. The absence of national registries, systematic follow-up and adequate recognition of slow-onset displacement means that many affected people remain institutionally invisible and may be prevented from entering a pathway towards durable solutions.



Violence may further complicate these trajectories. In parts of Central America, Colombia, Haiti and Mexico, disasters interact with armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights or organized crime, etc. These conditions may prevent safe return, interfere with assistance and reconstruction, contribute to dispossession and generate successive displacement.

4.2. Housing, land, livelihoods and territorial belonging

Housing loss was identified as one of the most visible factors associated with prolonged displacement. However, the provision of a house does not, by itself, constitute a durable solution.

Renters, informal occupants and people without recognized land rights may be excluded from reconstruction and compensation programmes designed primarily for formal property owners. Even where housing is provided, solutions may remain incomplete when the location is distant from employment, services, productive land or community networks.

The planned relocation of Petite Savanne in Dominica following Tropical Storm Erika demonstrated this challenge. Relocation was necessary because landslides had made

continued habitation unsafe. Nevertheless, residents lost not only their homes, but also agricultural livelihoods, bay leaf oil production and strong relationships with their former territory. The experience showed that planned relocation must address economic recovery, social cohesion and territorial identity alongside physical housing.

Similar concerns were raised in relation to Indigenous and traditional communities affected by floods in Brazil. Relocation to sites that do not reflect their territorial relationships, economic activities or cultural practices may create new vulnerabilities rather than resolve displacement.

Livelihood losses are therefore closely connected to housing and location. Disasters may destroy productive land, crops, livestock, fishing areas, markets and local businesses. Training and entrepreneurship programmes are not always aligned with people's existing skills or real economic opportunities. In Campo de la Cruz, for example, livelihood programmes did not consistently respond to the capacities and needs of affected households, while some agricultural training was not accompanied by the tools required to apply it. Housing and relocation programmes should consequently be connected to secure tenure, livelihood recovery, access to markets and credit, environmental restoration and the preservation of social and cultural ties.

4.3. Services, protection, social cohesion and life projects

Displacement also affects access to health, education, documentation, social protection and other essential services. People may have to move repeatedly because temporary accommodation is inadequate, rental assistance is insufficient or employment and services are unavailable in the places where they initially settle.

Registration processes may also generate exclusion. Experiences from Colombia showed that renters, informal occupants and other affected people were not always included in initial damage assessments and registries, delaying their access to assistance and reconstruction programmes.

Participants stressed that disaster responses frequently prioritize the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction of physical infrastructure without applying a sufficiently strong rights-based approach. Participation may be treated as a procedural requirement rather than as a means of allowing affected communities to influence decisions about their future.

The dialogue also highlighted the importance of social cohesion and psychosocial well-being. Long periods of uncertainty may contribute to family separation, weakened community networks, unresolved grief and emotional distress. In Campo de la Cruz, the extended period between evacuation and return affected family and community relationships. In Gramalote, the incorporation of psychosocial support and mechanisms for community participation helped address some of these broader impacts.

Recovery should therefore be understood as the reconstruction of people's **life projects**, not only the replacement of housing or sources of income. This broader perspective encompasses personal and family well-being, cultural identity, community relations, future aspirations and the capacity to live with autonomy and dignity.

Receiving communities must also be considered. Where displaced people integrate locally or are relocated, pressure on services, infrastructure and employment may generate tension. Supporting both displaced and host populations can reduce exclusion and contribute to more sustainable outcomes.

4.4. Governance, institutional capacity and legal frameworks

The challenges of governance and institutional coordination emerged as a transversal factor affecting all dimensions of prolonged displacement. Disaster displacement is often addressed through emergency management structures that are not designed to monitor and support affected people throughout reconstruction and recovery.

Responsibilities are frequently divided among institutions dealing with disaster response, housing, land, social protection, employment, environmental recovery and territorial planning. Without clear coordination, displaced households may face bureaucratic delays, contradictory decisions and gaps in assistance.

Local governments usually carry significant responsibilities but may lack the financing, technical capacity and legal tools needed to address displacement. Prevention and preparedness also tend to receive less political and financial attention than emergency response and reconstruction.

The Colombian experience showed that legal recognition can create an important basis for action, but legislation alone does not guarantee implementation. Rights-based frameworks require clear institutional responsibilities, financing, access to justice and mechanisms for participation and accountability.

Participants also emphasized that return should not automatically be treated as the preferred or only solution. Depending on people's circumstances and preferences, local integration and relocation may offer more appropriate alternatives. Each option requires adequate institutional support and long-term monitoring.

4.5. Recurrent risk and climate-resilient recovery

Environmental degradation and continued exposure to hazards may prevent safe return and undermine recovery. Reconstructing housing or infrastructure in unsafe locations can reproduce the conditions that led to displacement.

The Petite Savanne case in Brazil demonstrated that relocation may be unavoidable when environmental conditions make return impossible. In Brazil, insufficient access to safe land and delays in environmental recovery left some households in temporary accommodation or exposed to renewed hazards.

Participants stressed that recovery should not simply recreate pre-disaster conditions. Where those conditions were characterized by unsafe housing, poverty, environmental degradation or exclusion, restoring them may reproduce vulnerability and lead to further displacement.

Durable solutions should therefore connect housing and livelihood recovery with climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, ecosystem restoration and territorial planning. The objective should be to reduce recurrent risk and support safer and more sustainable development pathways.

4.6. Key messages from the dialogue

The first dialogue (panel) highlighted six central conclusions:

- Protracted displacement results from the interaction of the natural hazard, structural vulnerability, institutional weakness, material losses and recurrent risk.
- Monitoring often ends with the emergency phase, leaving displaced people and their longer-term needs institutionally invisible.
- Housing provision must be connected to secure tenure, livelihoods, services, social protection and territorial belonging.
- Return should not be treated as the only solution. Local integration and relocation must also be considered according to people's rights, preferences and circumstances.
- Recovery requires the restoration of social cohesion, psychosocial well-being and broader life projects, not only physical infrastructure.
- Durable solutions should reduce pre-existing vulnerability and prevent repeated displacement rather than merely restore the conditions that existed before the disaster.

The dialogue provided the diagnostic basis for the following session, which examined how humanitarian response, anticipatory action and early recovery can contribute to solutions from the start.

5. Solutions from the Start: Improving Humanitarian Response

The panel examined how disaster risk reduction, humanitarian response and human rights protection can work together from the outset to prevent displacement from becoming protracted. Contributions were provided by United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (IFRC)

and the Office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons IDPs.

"…For UNDRR perspective, prolonged displacement is not only a humanitarian challenge, but also often the result of accumulative and insufficiently managed risks…" ***– Aline Marsicano, UNDRR regional Office Americas and the Caribbean.***

5.1. Rights, inclusion and local systems

The representative of the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs stressed that solutions from the start require more than life-saving assistance. Emergency responses should also protect rights, dignity and agency, prevent marginalization and strengthen existing national and local systems rather than create parallel structures.

Experience from Mozambique illustrated several practical measures, including community consultations, the inclusion of displaced persons in local development planning and participatory budgeting, mobile civil documentation campaigns, psychosocial support and area-based programming benefiting both displaced and host communities.

The intervention also highlighted recurring shortcomings: treating solutions as a later phase, limiting participation to symbolic consultations, insufficiently considering local integration as one possible solution to displacement and establishing separate services for displaced populations instead of expanding existing public systems.

5.2. Anticipatory action and the humanitarian-recovery bridge

The IFRC representative drew on the response to hurricanes Eta and Iota in Honduras in 2020. Cash assistance, technical support for housing repairs and the rehabilitation of essential services helped some communities return and recover.

The intervention emphasized that early recovery should be incorporated into humanitarian plans from the beginning. Five areas were considered particularly important:

- timely and accessible information;
- protection, including family unity;
- documentation;
- meaningful community participation; and
- stronger local institutions.

IFRC also referred to recent work with IOM on an operational tool to integrate human mobility into early warning and anticipatory action. A central lesson was that more

investment is still directed towards responding to displacement than towards anticipating and reducing its impacts.

5.3. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

The UNDRR contribution emphasized that protracted displacement is often the result of accumulated and insufficiently managed risk. Humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction should therefore operate simultaneously rather than as separate phases.

Jamaica was presented as an example of investments made before Hurricane Melissa, including a legal disaster risk management framework, layered risk financing, disaster risk reduction budget tagging, local resilience planning and functioning early warning and emergency coordination mechanisms.

The example reinforced the importance of preparing national and local institutions before a disaster occurs. Local authorities are responsible for many of the decisions that directly affect displacement outcomes, including shelter management, service restoration, land use and engagement with affected communities.

5.4. Plenary discussion: identity, territory and life projects

The plenary discussion broadened the understanding of recovery beyond housing and livelihoods. Participants noted that displacement may also disrupt identity, cultural practices, social cohesion and relationships with territory.

The concept of a "**life project"** was proposed as a more comprehensive framework than livelihoods alone. It draws attention to people's capacity to rebuild their personal, family, social, economic and cultural futures.

This perspective is particularly relevant for Indigenous peoples and other communities whose identity, livelihoods and social organization are closely connected to specific territories, land and ecosystems.

5.5. Main messages

The panel highlighted that solutions from the start require:

- Integrating displacement risk into preparedness and anticipatory action;
- Connecting humanitarian assistance with early recovery;
- Protecting rights, documentation and family unity;
- Strengthening national and local systems;
- Ensuring meaningful participation;
- Adopting area-based approaches that include host communities;
- Avoiding parallel and promote inclusive systems; and

- Supporting the recovery of people's identities, territorial relationships and broader life projects.

5.7. Transition to the thematic group work

The session provided the bridge to the thematic group work that followed. While the plenary exchange focused on what can be done before and during humanitarian response, the group discussions examined the broader institutional, operational and financial changes required to move from humanitarian measures towards longer-term development approaches.



6. From Humanitarian to Development Approaches

The thematic group work focused on the institutional, social and operational changes required to move from short-term humanitarian responses towards longer-term development-oriented solutions. Participants worked in four groups and were asked to identify practical recommendations.

"…Traditional approaches, still too often centered on short-term humanitarian responses, are not enough when displacement becomes prolonged. What is needed is a stronger transition towards responses that are rights-based, government-led, community-based, climate-resilient and development-oriented…" ***– Sarah Maria Galea, EU Delegation in Panama***

6.1. Group 1: Governance and institutional arrangements

The group identified fragmented governance and weak coordination as major obstacles to durable solutions. Participants emphasized the need for a whole-of-government approach that links displacement policies with budgeting and development planning, while strengthening coordination across sectors and between national and local authorities. They also highlighted challenges related to limited government ownership, political cycles, and insufficient financing for implementation.

The discussion underscored the importance of strong political leadership and institutional anchoring, while ensuring continuity through permanent technical institutions. Participants stressed that transparency and accountability should be embedded in governance arrangements and supported through appropriate oversight and reporting mechanisms.

Regarding roles and responsibilities, participants agreed that national governments should set priorities, create an enabling policy environment and allocate resources, while local authorities play a central role in implementation. International organizations should support nationally led efforts through financing, technical expertise and capacity-building, and communities should be actively involved in shaping solutions. A recurring theme was the need for stronger collaboration between national and local levels to ensure sustainable and context-specific responses.

Key recommendations included:

- Linking displacement policies to budgeting and development planning processes.
- Strengthening coordination across government sectors and between national and local levels.
- Combining project-based initiatives with longer-term government-led approaches to support sustainability and scale.
- Position international organizations as enablers and capacity-builders supporting nationally led processes.
- Mobilize adequate and predictable financing to support implementation and avoid unfunded policy commitments.

6.2. Group 2: Government-led and community-driven solutions

The group emphasized that government leadership should not be understood as centralized or top-down decision-making. Public institutions should coordinate solutions through participatory governance arrangements established before disasters occur and developed together with affected communities.

Meaningful participation requires recognition of existing community leadership, local knowledge, historical experiences of exclusion and power relations. For Indigenous peoples and ethnic communities, participation must respect self-determination and culturally appropriate decision-making processes. Participants stressed that cultural adequacy involves more than language and that consultation should be informed, prior and deliberative.

The group also noted that excluding communities from decision-making can generate mistrust, tension, revictimization and conflict with receiving communities.

Key recommendations included:

- Establish inclusive governance structures and planning mechanisms before disasters occur.
- Work with existing community leadership while ensuring the participation of minorities and groups facing discrimination.
- Transfer resources, knowledge and technology to communities.
- Include accountability as a formal government obligation.
- Guarantee access to justice and protect community leaders involved in political and planning processes.

6.3. Group 3: Housing, livelihoods, documentation and services

The group focused on the necessary elements required to support displaced persons in both urban and rural settings.

A first recommendation was to establish inclusive registration systems designed and implemented with community participation. Initial registration should be sufficiently flexible to avoid exclusion, followed by verification and updating. Vulnerability indicators should be included from the outset to allow longitudinal monitoring and connection with social protection systems.

The group also called for inclusive housing and settlement planning. Communities should participate in the design of housing, public spaces, construction methods and rules governing new settlements. Planning should recognize existing forms of community organization and ethnic-territorial authorities.

Housing arrangements should be adapted to different contexts. Options may include individual, collective or institutional ownership, depending on what best supports security, sustainability and access to credit. Gradually declining rental subsidies were also discussed as a possible transition measure, while recognizing their cost.

Livelihood recommendations included:

- Protecting previous livelihoods where they can be continued in the new location.
- Allowing mixed residential and economic uses within settlements.
- Recognizing and certifying existing skills.
- Employing affected persons in response and reconstruction activities.
- Developing agreements with employers and progressively reduced employment subsidies to support labour market integration.

6.4. Group 4: Innovative financing and the mosaic of funding options

The group emphasized the need to diversify financing beyond traditional international cooperation and to combine national, local, development, climate and private sources.

Participants identified several barriers. Information on available funds and access procedures is often difficult to find, while disaster risk reduction, environmental and displacement actors frequently use different terminology and operate through separate institutions. Displacement also tends to lack a specific budget classification, making it difficult to estimate its costs and allocate resources.

The discussion highlighted possible entry points, including multilateral development banks, climate and loss and damage finance, local financing mechanisms, public-private partnerships and the integration of displacement into disaster risk management investments.

The planned relocation experience in Panama illustrated the consequences of insufficient long-term financing and legal certainty. A process extending across several years and different administrations may return to an emergency situation when implementation is delayed.

Key recommendations included:

- Estimate and make visible the economic and social costs of displacement through better data and multi-level coordination.
- Provide practical technical support to governments on which financing sources exist and how to access them.
- Map and exchange national and local financing mechanisms, including taxes, bonds and cost- or benefit-sharing arrangements.
- Link planning and financing from the outset, rather than seeking resources only after policies or relocation processes have been designed.

6.5. Main conclusions from the thematic group work

The group discussions highlighted four common priorities:

- Durable solutions require whole-of-government coordination, clear responsibilities and a direct link between policy, planning and budgeting.
- Government responsibility must be combined with meaningful community participation and partnerships with local actors.
- Registration, housing, livelihoods, services and social protection should be designed as interconnected components.
- Financing should be diversified, accessible and planned in advance, with stronger connections to development, climate, disaster risk reduction and local financing mechanisms.

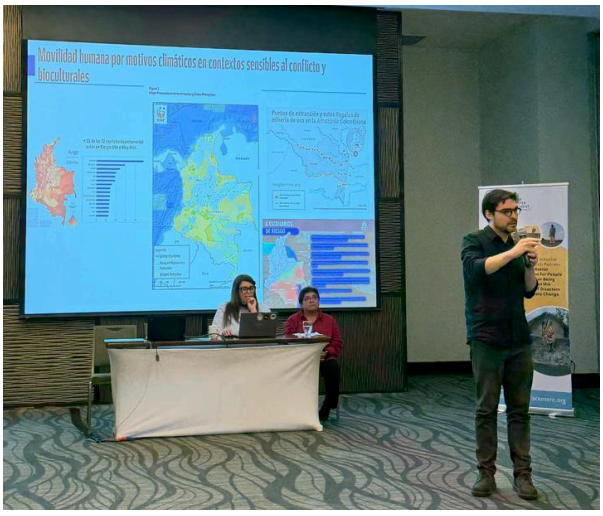
7. What Makes a Solution Truly Durable?

The plenary discussion examined the meaning of durable solutions through two practical experiences: legal and judicial responses to disaster and climate-related displacement in Colombia, and the development of a national planned relocation framework in Panama.

7.1. Legal recognition, access to justice and implementation in Colombia

The role of litigation and legal advocacy in Colombia was presented as avenue for advancing the recognition and protection of people displaced by climate change, environmental degradation and disasters in this country.

The Colombian Constitutional Court's Judgment T-123/2024 established human rights obligations across three stages: prevention and adaptation; protection and assistance during displacement; and return, resettlement or reintegration. The case demonstrated how strategic litigation can help transform displacement from an invisible or fragmented issue into one requiring coordinated State action.



The presentation also reviewed Colombia's recent legislation recognizing internal displacement associated with climate change, environmental degradation and disasters. Positive elements include the obligation to develop a public policy, define competent authorities and create a new national "disaster displacement registry".

At the same time, several implementation gaps remain, including conceptual ambiguity, the absence of an explicit durable-solutions framework and the lack of a dedicated financing mechanism. The central message was that legal recognition is an important first step, but it must be accompanied by budgets, institutional coordination, access to justice and effective implementation.

7.2. Planned relocation in Panama

The Panama experience illustrated that planned relocation should be understood as a long-term public policy process rather than as the physical transfer of a community from one location to another.

With support from PDD, Panama's Ministry of Environment has been developing a National Protocol on Planned Relocation. The process has included legal and policy

analysis, field visits, consultations, workshops, interviews and dialogue with affected communities and public institutions. The experience highlighted the importance of establishing procedures before planned relocation becomes necessary. It also emphasized that planned relocation must be participatory, rights-based, culturally appropriate and connected to climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Particular attention was given to Indigenous peoples and communities with strong territorial, cultural and livelihood ties. In these contexts, planned relocation requires respect for self-determination, culturally appropriate consultation and continuity of livelihoods and community life.

7.3. Common criteria for durable solutions

The two experiences reinforced several common criteria:

- A court decision, legal framework or physical relocation does not by itself constitute a durable solution.
- People must have access to safe and adequate housing, secure tenure, livelihoods, services and social protection.
- Affected communities must participate meaningfully in decisions concerning their future.
- Solutions must address the causes of risk and reduce the likelihood of repeated displacement.
- Legal mandates require clear responsibilities, institutional capacity and predictable financing.
- Progress should be monitored over time to determine whether people have recovered autonomy, security and a dignified life.

The discussion therefore emphasized that a solution becomes durable only when displacement-specific vulnerabilities have been sustainably reduced and affected people can rebuild their lives without facing renewed risk, exclusion or dependency.

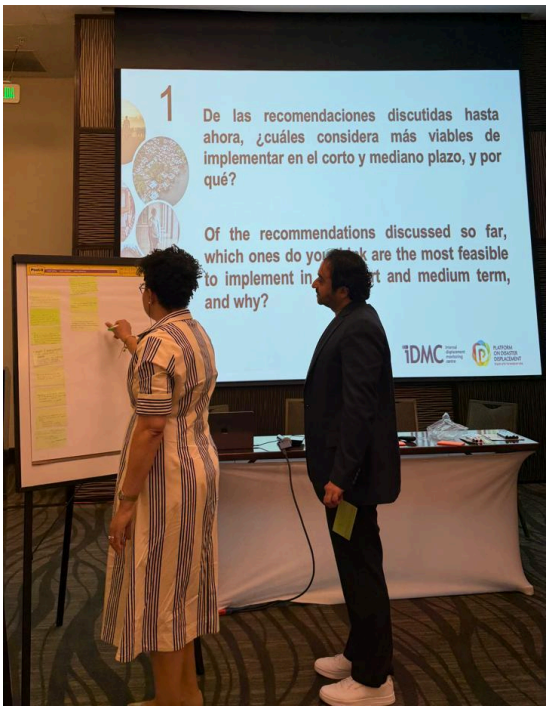
"…On planned relocation in the Caribbean, there is considerable resistance, and the availability of land is a major concern in small island States. Resistance is also linked to ancestral attachments, religious and social ties, land rights and the fear of losing land that families may have occupied for generations without formal ownership. There is also significant distrust towards governments…" ***– Dr. Nathasha Mortley, Jamaica.***

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8. From Recommendations to Implementation

This final interactive plenary session invited participants to test the preliminary recommendations against practical implementation realities. Participants responded individually to four questions using *post-it* notes, which were then grouped and discussed in plenary. The exercise helped move the discussion from general recommendations towards concrete questions of feasibility, leadership, incentives and follow-up. It also provided the basis for the subsequent discussion on regional and international processes capable of advancing the agenda.

8.1. Recommendations considered most feasible



Participants generally considered the most feasible recommendations to be those that could be integrated into existing government, development, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction systems.

In the short term, priority actions included:

- Mainstreaming disaster displacement into existing development, climate and disaster risk management plans;
- Strengthening inclusive registration systems, with the participation of affected communities, as well as data collection and longer-term monitoring of displaced populations;
- Developing practical protocols, guidance materials and training for national and local institutions;
- Promoting inter-institutional dialogue and clearer coordination between different levels of government;
- Formalizing community participation and working through existing local leadership and civil society structures; and
- Using current regional and legal processes to promote peer learning and maintain political attention.

For the medium term, participants highlighted the need to strengthen legal and policy frameworks, institutionalize local and community capacities, and improve access to financing for planned relocation and other durable solutions. Proposals included reviewing

existing funding mechanisms, exploring contingency credit and strengthening regional exchanges on financing, law and public policy.

These recommendations were viewed as feasible because they could build on existing plans, institutions, financial instruments and regional commitments. They could also be introduced progressively, allowing governments and partners to achieve early results while creating the conditions for more structural reforms.

8.2. Leadership and participating actors

Participants broadly agreed that national governments should lead implementation because they hold the primary responsibility for protecting internally displaced persons and establishing the necessary legal, policy and financial frameworks.

Leadership should be inter-institutional and include relevant ministries and agencies responsible for disaster risk management, environment, housing, planning, finance, social protection, health, education and statistics. Local and subnational governments were considered essential for implementation, given their proximity to affected communities and territories.

Participants also emphasized that implementation should involve:

- affected and host communities, community-based organizations, Indigenous peoples and local leaders;
- civil society organizations, Ombudspersons and national human rights institutions;
- international and regional organizations, donors and development partners;
- academia, researchers and the scientific community; and
- the private sector, particularly in financing, housing, employment and infrastructure.

International actors were seen primarily as providers of technical assistance, financing and support for coordination and accountability. PDD, IDMC and other organizations and regional platforms could facilitate dialogue, exchange of practices and cooperation, while implementation should remain government-led and community-informed.

8.3. Incentives for implementation

Participants identified a combination of legal, political, financial and reputational incentives that could encourage governments and other stakeholders to act.

For governments, important incentives included compliance with human rights and international commitments, reducing the economic and social costs of displacement, strengthening resilience and demonstrating commitment to climate justice. Greater

political visibility, clear evidence of results and the possibility of learning from successful national experiences were also considered relevant.

Financial incentives included easier access to climate and development finance, contingency credit, seed funding, technical assistance and instruments that reward progress in prevention and durable solutions. Participants also suggested incentives for private banks and companies, including reduced investment risks, greater social value and opportunities to contribute to resilient recovery.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of stronger data and advocacy. Evidence showing the links between displacement, human development, security, losses and damages could help make the issue more politically and financially compelling. Practical and visible initiatives, supported by clear tools and measurable results, were considered more likely to attract sustained support.

8.4. Regional and international entry points

Participants identified several regional and international processes through which the recommendations could be advanced over the next 12 to 24 months. A recurring message was the need to connect disaster displacement with broader resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate, development and human mobility agendas. Rather than creating separate processes, participants recommended using common narratives and coordinated financing to reduce fragmentation and make better use of limited resources.

Strategic entry points identified during the discussion included:

- The development of the CARICOM Migration Governance Framework, particularly its pillar on climate and environmental mobility;
- The preparation of the IPCC Seventh Assessment Report, including its consideration of human mobility and solution-oriented climate action;
- Regional disaster risk reduction processes, including discussions on the framework that will follow the Sendai Framework after 2030 and the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction planned for 2027 (to be hosted by Commonwealth of the Bahamas);
- the Cartagena+40 process and other regional protection frameworks that can maintain technical engagement and support the progressive development of standards and practices;
- The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) and related local inclusion initiatives involving displaced persons, refugees, stateless persons and populations at risk;
- City networks and municipal coordination mechanisms, given the central role of local governments in service delivery, land-use planning, financing and implementation; and

- CARICOM and OECS free movement, border management and documentation arrangements, particularly in small island contexts where disasters may require cross-border movement.

Participants also stressed the importance of sustained engagement with technical government officials, whose institutional knowledge may provide continuity across political transitions. Regional platforms, academia, civil society and international organizations can support these officials through evidence, peer learning and examples of workable practices.

Some participants additionally noted that bilateral cooperation arrangements may offer opportunities to strengthen local preparedness, reception and reintegration, provided that their implementation remains consistent with protection standards and the needs of affected communities.

Overall, the discussion showed that disaster displacement should be introduced across multiple policy arenas rather than confined to a single institutional track. Maintaining the issue on regional and international agendas was considered the first necessary step towards translating the recommendations into action.

9. Conclusion and Way Forward

The Regional Expert Consultation confirmed that protracted disaster displacement cannot be addressed through short-term humanitarian responses alone. It is a broader development, governance, human rights and climate resilience challenge that requires sustained action before, during and after disasters.

Throughout the consultation, participants emphasized that durable solutions depend on the combination of adequate housing, secure tenure, livelihoods, access to services, social protection, community participation and reduced exposure to future risks. Legal recognition and policy commitments are important, but they must be accompanied by clear institutional responsibilities, reliable data, adequate capacities and predictable financing.

The discussions also reinforced the need for solutions to be government-led while remaining genuinely shaped by affected communities. National leadership, local implementation, regional cooperation and support from international organizations, development banks, civil society, academia and the private sector all have complementary roles to play.

The consultation provided a regional perspective on the findings and proposals contained in the two background documents and generated practical recommendations for moving from crisis management towards rights-based, development-oriented and climate-resilient solutions. These inputs will inform the next stages of the PDD project, including the

refinement of the background studies and the development of recommendations for national, regional and international action.

The main challenge ahead is to translate the emerging recommendations into implementation. This will require linking policies with budgets, strengthening coordination across sectors and levels of government, supporting local and community capacities, and integrating disaster displacement into development planning, climate action and disaster risk reduction frameworks.



The Panama Expert Consultation should therefore be understood not as the end of the process, but as a contribution to an ongoing regional dialogue. Continued engagement among participants and their institutions will be essential to advance the recommendations, share emerging practices and ensure that people displaced by disasters and the adverse effects of climate change are able to rebuild their lives in safety, dignity and with greater resilience.

Agenda

Time	Session
08:30 - 09:00	**Registration and coffee**
09:00 - 09:20	**Opening session** -Professor Walter Käelin, Envoy of the Chair, Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). - Sarah Maria Galea, Cooperation Section, EU Delegation to Panama. -Alexandra Hilbig, Head of Sector Programme, Migration and Development (GIZ).
09:20 - 09:35	**Objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes of the consultation** *Presents: PDD*
09:35 - 10:00	**Mapping expertise in the room: participant introductions** *Presents: PDD*
10:00 - 10:30	**Presentation of the project and background documents** *Presents: PDD*
10:30 - 11:00	**FRAMING SESSION 1: What do we know and what do we still not know about disaster displacement?** ***Data, trends and dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean -20 min*** *Presents: IDMC* ***Practical guide for the production of harmonized statistics on forced displacement and migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) – 10 min*** *Presents: IDMC*
11:00 - 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 - 12:15	**FRAMING SESSION 2: Protracted disaster displacement: a global review of the state of knowledge** *Presents: PDD*
12:15 - 13:00	**EXPERT DIALOGUE 1: Why does displacement become protracted in disaster and climate change contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean?**
13:00 - 14:30	**Lunch**
14:30 - 15:30	**EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES: Solutions from the start: How to improve the humanitarian response?**
15:30 - 16:30	**THEMATIC GROUP WORK: From humanitarian to development approaches**
16:30 - 16:45	**Coffee break**
16:45 – 17: 15	**Day 1 wrap-up & Plenary read-out: First set of recommendations**

Day 2, Thursday, 23 July 2026

Half-day session

Time	Session
09:00 - 09:15	**Recap of Day 1**
09:15 - 10:00	**PLENARY DISCUSSION: What makes a solution truly durable?**
10:00 - 11:00	**EXPERT DIALOGUE 2: from recommendations to implementation**
11:00 - 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 - 12:15	**Bridge session: regional and international processes that can move the agenda forward**
12:15- 13:00	**Plenary discussion on recommendations, closing and next steps**
13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch**

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List of participants

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