Summary: The Annual Report provides a review of the progress of the Solutions Alliance from early 2014 to the end of 2015 and highlights opportunities ahead. It also underscores the upcoming transition towards a new governance framework for the Alliance.

Background

The Solutions Alliance traces its beginnings to April 2013, when a group of humanitarian and development actors gathered in Amsterdam to take stock of their collective experience in seeking solutions to displacement. Since then, substantial progress has been made in their understanding of solutions, but the global displacement context has also worsened. There are now approximately 20 million refugees or asylum-seekers and another 40 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), most of whom have been displaced for over five years.  

While the main drivers of forced displacement include disasters, climate change, and conflict, in 2015 a new pattern emerged of large-scale, onward movement from countries of first asylum, as approximately 1 million refugees and migrants fled to Europe. Not since World War II has displacement reached such a scale or commanded such global attention. There is a growing and urgent consensus that conventional humanitarian responses are insufficient to effect comprehensive solutions to displacement and that the full range of public and private development and humanitarian stakeholders need to work together in new ways and with new financial instruments. Together, these actors must collaboratively address both the root causes of displacement and enhance the self-reliance of those whose displacement has become prolonged, while pursuing durable solutions.

The Comparative Advantage

Among the many initiatives and institutions tackling prolonged displacement, the Solutions Alliance has two unique attributes:

1) The first is its multi-stakeholder character: the Solutions Alliance is the only entity that brings together donor and host governments, development and humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and academia. This inclusive and equitable approach holds great promise for achieving greater impact, innovation, and sustainability for solutions.

2) The second unique attribute is that the Solutions Alliance works to ground high-level policy discussions in actual solutions for real contexts. By working through specific National Groups and Thematic Groups, the Solutions Alliance has an operational dimension from which all can learn and make a concrete contribution.

Core Messages from the 2014 Roundtable on Solutions

- Solutions require long-term responses. One should adopt a solutions lens early on, preferably from the very beginning of a displacement crisis.
- Finding solutions to displacement requires a shared responsibility of host governments, donors, UN agencies, and NGOs/civil society organisations.
- Build on displaced persons’ own capacities. View refugees as rights holders and economic actors.
- Place emphasis on quick transitions from food and cash assistance to strategies for self-reliance.
- Whenever possible, aim at turning displacement challenges into sustainable development opportunities. Place emphasis on making markets work for everybody – do not single out the displaced.
- Seek to ensure flexible and long term funding commitments.
The Solutions Alliance was launched at the Copenhagen Roundtable on Solutions in April 2014. There the Alliance partners agreed on a provisional statement of goals and objectives, as well as an interim governance structure. Most importantly, the Alliance also committed to advocate a set of core messages during the lead up to the Sustainable Development Goals, launched their first National Groups in Somalia and Zambia, and agreed on three Thematic Groups: Engaging the Private Sector; Research, Data, and Performance Management; and Common Messaging. The Common Messaging Group was phased out once its mandate had been fulfilled. Further interest by partners led to the creation of the Rule of Law Thematic Group later in 2014.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, the Alliance continued to meet informally to advance a shared understanding of solutions, holding follow-up meetings and UNHCR Executive Committee side events in 2014 and 2015.

### Becoming Operational

#### National Groups

At the **Somalia National Group** launch event on 12 March 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya, the Group considered how it could best support the Somalia New Deal and the United Nations High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees. Bringing together representatives of NGOs, UN agencies, the World Bank, and donor agencies, as well as the Governments of Somalia and Kenya, the National Group decided to harness its multi-stakeholder character by initially focusing on developing a results framework for the Somali displacement, which links to the five Somalia New Deal Peace and State Building Goals.

**“Zambia has a proud tradition of protecting vulnerable people throughout the region and now has the opportunity to become a refugee model for the continent and the world.”**

- David Young & Bernd Finke in 2014

The **National Group in Zambia** brings stakeholders together to support the 2014 Strategic Framework for the Local Integration of Former Refugees in Zambia. Zambia is a strong example of a context where multiple stakeholders, notably including the private sector, are working to integrate Angolan refugees into the national economy while simultaneously supporting host nationals. Further indicating the initiative’s positive impact for the host community, in 2015 the Government of Zambia agreed to extend the local settlement policy to eligible Rwandans, and by year-end was well advanced on the demarcation of new farmlands for refugees and host nationals.

#### Thematic Groups

The **Engaging the Private Sector Thematic Group** was created in June 2014. The Group explores ways of better engaging the private sector – local small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as international companies – and linking their contributions to displacement challenges in order to create development opportunities and economic value for displaced persons and their host communities. Based on the **Creating Shared Value** approach, the Group works towards the creation of economic opportunities for displaced persons and host community members, while also creating new market opportunities for partner companies.
The group held its first Business Consultation in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2015, bringing together approximately 50 stakeholders from the private sector, government, NGOs, think tanks, and humanitarian and development actors. Participants considered the shared value that can be achieved in the context of displacement, as well as best practices, opportunities, and priorities in implementing a Framework for Business Action. Several concrete pilot initiatives resulted from the meeting.

The Rule of Law Thematic Group began its work in late 2014, aiming to ensure that initiatives on rule of law support the search for solutions and advocating for legal conditions to ensure that solutions are durable. The Group is currently focusing on two initiatives: (a) a scoping study to provide a framework for a possible guidance note by the UN Secretary-General on the contribution of rule of law to solutions to displacement; and (b) operational guidance on how to include housing, land, and property in solutions planning, intended primarily to support National Groups.

During the course of 2015, the Thematic Group on Research, Data, and Performance Management decided to divide its work into two tracks: a) Research and Data; and b) Performance Management. Early work by Research and Data partners included compiling a list of resource documents on development solutions in situations of forced displacement. The Group also decided on the creation of an online platform for information sharing, to become available in 2016 with the new Solutions Alliance website. The Group identified a key gap in the methodologies for assessing the impact of refugees on host economies and collaborated with the World Bank’s migration and development unit, KNOMAD,12 to begin addressing this issue at the first of two workshops in Washington, D.C. on 20-21 November 2015. Additional Group partners, including the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs13 and JIPS,14 are currently developing indicators on durable solutions for IDPs, to be piloted in early 2016. Partners in Performance Management, including UNHCR and Canada, are also drafting guidelines on performance management in displacement situations.

### Framework for Business Action

**Engaging the Private Sector Thematic Group**

Business engagement can be achieved in several ways. A practical, simple framework focusing on concrete challenges and solutions in four inter-connected areas can jump-start collaboration:

- Facilitating the access of displaced persons to employment;
- Integrating refugees, internally displaced persons, and small and medium-sized enterprises into the value chains of larger companies;
- Updating and upgrading the job skills of displaced persons; and
- Products and services delivery to displaced people, especially those in urban settings.

### Structure

**Secretariat**

Set up in February 2015, the Solutions Alliance Secretariat is located within the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) office in Geneva, Switzerland. The Secretariat’s small team has focused on establishing partnerships with like-minded institutions, developing guidance for the creation of new National Groups, liaising with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) regarding solutions training, redesigning the Solutions Alliance website, and preparing the 2016 Roundtable in Brussels, Belgium. The Secretariat has also been supporting the Solutions Alliance Co-Chairs as they advocate for solutions in several high-level forums including national contexts, the

Governance

At the end of 2015, the Co-Chairs of the Solutions Alliance proposed that the 2016 Roundtable confirm an updated Governing Board structure with a sixth member from an international financial institution, led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair, and supported by an Advisory Board. They also defined the roles of Alliance partners, as well as the functions of National and Thematic Groups.

A Look Ahead

The Solutions Alliance will continue to contribute actively to global and national discussions on displacement solutions in 2016. The Alliance has already been invited to contribute to meetings on displacement hosted by a number of actors, including the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the World Bank, the UN, as well as several events specific to the Syria crisis, all of which lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit on 23-24 May and the 19 September UN Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees. The Solutions Alliance Roundtable on 9-10 February 2016 will help to add value to the various upcoming events, particularly through the Roundtable Summary Statement. The Solutions Alliance’s multi-stakeholder character and emphasis on solutions in specific contexts can help advance cooperation between development and humanitarian actors in finding solutions for the displaced.