UNDP’s Response To The Crisis In Iraq

Background

Iraq is currently facing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world and a Level 3 emergency was declared for Iraq by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator in June 2014. Since January 2014, more than 2.1 million Iraqis have been displaced by violence and many are still in urgent need of help. Almost half of these newly displaced Iraqis have taken refuge in the Kurdistan Region, which already hosts 225,000 refugees from the conflict in Syria and which has had a 23% increase in its population in just 1 year. Women, children, elderly and minority groups are especially vulnerable. Children make up almost half of the displaced in northern Iraq. The displacement crisis has seriously affected the Government’s capacity to take care of the Syrian refugees and Government resources for capital investments have been diverted to respond to some of the urgent needs such as electricity and roads for newly constructed camps. The huge strain on the delivery of basic services to the Iraqi population has been compounded by the fiscal crisis in 2014. The falling oil prices will also impact Iraq’s financial situation in 2015.

In response to the displacement crisis, UNDP is combining lessons learned from long-term engagement in Iraq with global expertise in emergency response. UNDP’s core capabilities to promote resilience through support to institutional development, equitable service delivery, economic recovery, livelihood support and access to justice in a gender equitable manner positions UNDP as a longer term development partner. Its focus is not just on IDPs, refugees but more broadly on affected populations, including the host communities. Fundamental to UNDP’s ability to deliver is the organisation’s established relationship of trust with the local authorities, including its network of sub/field offices in Basra, Dohuk, Erbil and Sulimaniya, and a privileged relationship with some of the central and regional Ministries.

UNDP is leading the coordination of Early Recovery as global lead agency for Early Recovery, by establishing the Social Cohesion and Sustainable Livelihoods Cluster for the IDP response, within the Humanitarian Country Team system, and by co-leading the Livelihoods Sector Working Group for the refugee response. Also, UNDP and UNHCR are jointly spearheading the Regional Refugee and Resilience response, through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), with UNDP leading the resilience component of the plan. This requires a strong collaboration with national/regional Government counterparts so that a longer term approach is adopted from an early stage, and it places UNDP at the forefront of the resilience agenda.

In light of all of the above, UNDP has developed the Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP). This programme is fully rooted in the Resilience approach, which ensures that the foundations are laid to meet medium and long-term needs, with a growing
capacity of communities for self-reliance and an increased Government service delivery to affected communities.

**The Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)**

The ICRRP focuses on areas that will not be covered by other humanitarian clusters or agencies. In order to strengthen the ownership of Iraqi national authorities, activities are implemented in close collaboration and coordination with Government and national NGOs in addition to UN and international agencies. With a goal of longer-term resilience building, UNDP strongly complements the primarily life-saving and shorter-term activities carried out by other partner with this multi-sectoral, integrated project strategy that has sustainability at its core and has divided up its work in 5 specific outputs:

1) *The set-up and operationalisation of the crisis response coordination infrastructure and mechanisms at the Central and Governorate levels*

UNDP has been assisting the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) specifically in enhancing crisis coordination within the government through the establishment of a Joint Crisis Centre (JCC) at the ministry level with the mandate of coordinating the current and future crises. DFID has seconded a senior advisor to the JCC and UNDP partnered with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to set up the centre.

The main activities under this output are the following:
- Establish and operationalise the JCC with adequate facilities and IT equipment
- Support the operationalization of the JCC in meeting international standards in the management of and response to the current humanitarian crisis
- Develop capacity of coordination bodies for effective coordination and data collection and management on crisis response at Federal, Regional and Governorate levels.

As a result, the Government should be able to generate accurate information on the crisis that can be used for decision making at strategic and policy level. Although the initial emphasis has been on the JCC, discussions are ongoing to support the Crisis Centre at Federal level and the crisis cells at Governorate level.

2) *The Improvement of basic service delivery, institutional responsiveness and accountability at the district and sub-district levels*

The sudden increase of displaced populations in the host communities has put significant pressure on the government capacity of the basic public services in affected areas. Host communities and IDP camps/settlements alike suffer from inadequate public utility services, such as frequent water and electricity shortages, lack of schools, overstretched health centres, rising food and fuel prices, accumulated rubbish and sanitation concerns.
Thus, UNDP focuses on the rehabilitation and construction of local infrastructures in some new IDP camps in Kurdistan. Priorities are determined in a participatory manner between the displaced population and their host communities and include housing, waste-management and water supply. To achieve this, UNDP is working in partnership with the Governorates and UN-Habitat and IOM, as main partners. In total, more sustainable housing and infrastructure has been supplied for around 10,000 IDPs in 2014.

The main activities under this output are the following:

- Rehabilitate and construct priority basic service infrastructures in IDP camps/settlements and neighbouring communities
- Support the development and roll out of participatory needs assessments looking at basic service in selected host communities, ensuring the participation of women, youth, IDPs and minorities.
- Assist the Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments in effective planning and budgeting to deliver basic services responding to fluid demographic changes.

To ensure a better assessment of service delivery and the livelihoods situation of the host communities, UNDP is partnering with REACH, specialized in conducting assessments and surveys, to carry out the Host Communities Needs Assessment which has similar questions as the Multi Sector and Multi Cluster needs assessments, so that comparisons can be made. The results are expected to be available in January 2015.

3) **Provision of livelihoods and local economic recovery support to IDPs, Refugees and their Host Communities**

In order to make the affected population more self-reliant and less dependent on external aid, livelihoods support is a corner stone of the UNDP crisis response. UNDP focuses on both emergency livelihoods stabilization as well as local economic recovery for longer term employment and income generation. The Emergency Markets Mapping and Analysis (EMMA), supported by UNDP with other partners such as DRC and UNHCR, is a key tool to prepare the affected population more effectively on the growing labour opportunities.

While Government policy allows registered refugees and IDPs to work, difficulties in finding employment outside of the informal sector are a reality, as is competition within and between the host communities, refugees and IDPs.

UNDP is therefore supporting livelihoods stabilization and local economic recovery efforts aimed to: i) alleviate immediate tensions over access to employment and other livelihoods assets between host community members and displaced population groups (refugees and IDPs); ii) increase the overall economic absorption capacities and resilience of host communities to support refugees and IDPs; and iii) support more diversified livelihoods
opportunities, enterprise recovery and skills development for the most vulnerable groups within communities, to strengthen their resilience beyond the crisis.

The main activities under this output are divided up in three components:
• Conduct a market and livelihoods assessment for host communities and other conflict affected areas
• Create immediate income generation and livelihood opportunities for at least 12,000 men and women through emergency employment for affected host community members and vulnerable groups (at least 35% women)
• Provide vocational, business training to improve employment potential of vulnerable host community and IDP breadwinners
• Promote local businesses and strengthen the private sector to provide sustainable livelihoods opportunities for at least 5,000 men and women for conflict affected (host) communities and displaced population groups (at least 50% women).

Through a Small Grants Program that was set up in 2014, around 12 NGOs are currently being supported for different livelihood activities which should result in 4,000 people benefiting from start-up grants for small businesses, 3,215 people benefit from vocational and business training opportunities and 3,000 IDPs and host communities provided with employment opportunities. The small grants facility for local NGOs also provides an opportunity to reach out to geographical areas where the UN has limited access.

4) **Strengthening of protection mechanisms for vulnerable communities, specifically women and youth**

Women and girls are among those hardest hit by the current crisis and require gender specific support and protection during displacement. Amongst other things IDP and refugee women and young girls are at serious risk of increased vulnerabilities for sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), trafficking as well as sexual harassment, abuse and forced under-age marriages, rape, abduction, sexual slavery.

Activities address immediate social protection needs while working through institutional structures established with UNDP support as part of its broader rule of law and access to justice programmatic support. More specifically, this will entail on the provision of emergency prevention and protection measures targeting women and girls who are vulnerable to abuse, violations and exploitation. They build on past and on-going efforts to strengthen the rule of law and improve protection and access to justice and through institutional support.

The main activities under this output are the following:
• Development and roll-out of capacity needs assessments of protection mechanisms
• Rapid and continuous monitoring of situation of vulnerable segments of women and girl refugees within and outside the refugee camps who are prone to SGBV, in particular but
not limited to trafficking, forced and under-age marriages, rape, abduction, sexual slavery etc.

- Establishing legal assistance mechanism and social support for survivors and those exposed to SGBV, within camps and in host communities
- Creating enhanced surge capacity for key institutions in Iraq to respond to women’s, girls’ and other vulnerable groups’ needs in the IDPs camps, as well as in host communities (Directorate for Tracing Violence against Women (DfTVAW) in Ministry of Interior of Kurdistan, Family Protection Units in Center and South Iraq, Governorates, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraqi and Kurdistan Bar Associations and relevant justice institutions in Iraq).

5) **Strengthening of social cohesion through dialogue and capacity building of local and national actors and communities**

Social tension, between host communities and IDPs is on the rise, countrywide, and likely to increase further as the chronic nature and longer term impacts on host communities becomes more evident. Maintaining peaceful relations, or at least tolerance, between host communities and the displaced is essential to ensure a conducive environment for humanitarian actors to operate and for adequate durable solutions be identified and promoted.

In addition to the promotion of livelihoods outlined above in the first phase, activities focus on areas of displacement and when longer-term durable solutions, especially returns, become feasible, attention will shift to return areas.

UNDP will be monitoring the trends of key triggers of tension, including rising rents, falling daily labour rates, deterioration in public services in areas of pre-existing social tension, in partnership with the authorities. A pilot project for data collection and analysis of trends in the Kurdistan region will be progressively expanded to cover other parts of the country. Data collection and analysis will benefit from protection and other clusters' monitoring and or stand-alone assessments, to inform strategic decisions on targeting of limited resources and identification of appropriate interventions.

Mechanisms for inclusive dialogue and stronger community solidarity between local authorities, host communities and IDPs will be fostered using existing structures but also media and other non-traditional channels of communications. Communities consultations will inform prioritization of cash for work programs which will not only result in emergency job creation, but also in increased access to essential public services, complementing the education, WASH and Health clusters’ initiatives. Community consultations will also have risk education and emergency safety information sessions with regards to land mines since IDPs and Syrian refugees often lack familiarity of contaminated areas in KRG and are more vulnerable to unknowingly entering contaminated land.
The main activities under this output are the following:

- Establish or strengthen dialogue groups to support social-cohesion between IDP and host communities through regular dialogues among different social groups and community volunteer activities
- Build the capacity of IDP Women groups to ensure that specific needs of women are voiced
- Monitor the tensions between IDPs and host communities and prioritise the responses to mitigate potential conflict
- Risk education and emergency safety information sessions held for IDPs and refugees in camps and non-camp settings as well as to host communities
- Build the capacity of communities to develop and roll out of participatory assessment tools and methodologies that will enable them to highlight the main threats to their safety and barriers to development and help shape the responses required.

Geographical Coverage

The current programme has set up the local presence and delivery mechanisms that will allow scaling up should additional funds become available.

The geographic coverage of the programme is:

- Erbil, Duhok and Suleymaniyah (Northern Iraq – KR-I); which are hosting around 946,000 IDPs and 230,000 Syrian refugees. The large majority of the IDPs are in Dohuk governorate (estimated at 650,000)
- Disputed Internal Boundaries (DiBS) (Northern Iraq, including Ninewa and Kirkuk) hosting an estimate of 220,000 IDPs
- Najaf, Anbar and Basra (South and Central Iraq), hosting an estimate of 450,000 IDPs

In addition to the various field offices, UNDP has deployed community mobilization officers, as national UNVs, across Iraq (Karbala, Najaf, Basra, Erbil, Duhok, Sulimaniya) who specifically focus on community solidarity projects.

Funding Overview

The overall cost of the ICRRP is USD 44 million. So far, UNDP has mobilised USD 14.5 million from various partners. Nevertheless, the programme still has a funding gap of USD 29.55 million for which proposals were included in the 2015 IDP Strategic Response Plan and the 3RP for Syrian refugees.
## United Nations Development Programme in Iraq

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Cost (USD)</th>
<th>Available Funding (USD)</th>
<th>Funding Gap (USD)</th>
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<td>Output 1: The set-up and operationalisation of the crisis response coordination infrastructure and mechanisms at the Central and Governorate levels</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$14,500,000</strong></td>
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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. UNDP has been present in Iraq since 1976. Since 2003, it has worked to support the Government and people of Iraq in their transition towards reconciliation, peace and stability. UNDP has also been supporting emergency physical rehabilitation projects in addition to improving the quality of basic service delivery, including health, water and electricity.