



Global IDP
PROJECT

**Training Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles
on Internal Displacement**

Jos, Nigeria, 17-19 February 2003

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This report tries to summarize and reflect the individual opinions expressed during the workshop and does not necessarily coincide with the institutional positions of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) or the National Commission for Refugees in Nigeria

Background

The Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has since 1998 organized training workshops to raise awareness about the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement among NGOs, public institutions, UN agencies and the IDPs themselves. Since 1999, the Project has organized similar workshops in Angola, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, India, Liberia, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Uganda, Indonesia and Nepal. The workshops are co-organized by local counterparts, often by the government agency responsible for the protection and assistance of internally displaced people (IDPs).

On 19 June 2002, the President of Nigeria decided that internal displacement should be added to the mandate of the Nigerian National Commission for Refugees (NCFR). Faced with this new task, the NCFR quickly identified the need to better understand the rights and needs of IDPs and to strengthen its capacity to respond to forced internal displacement. In discussions with the Global IDP Project/NRC, it was agreed that the project's training package could be beneficial not only to the NCFR but also to other public institutions, representatives from affected states and non-governmental organizations. The outcome was a workshop held at the Hill Station Hotel in the city of Jos (state capital of Plateau State) from 17-19 February 2003.

The workshop was organized with the following objectives:

- To promote and disseminate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- To explain and discuss basic international human rights and humanitarian law concepts as covered by the Guiding Principles.
- To analyze the current state of implementation of the Guiding Principles in Nigeria.
- To identify and discuss causes of displacement and possible preventive measures.
- To seek ways to more fully implement the Guiding Principles in Nigeria.
- To promote dialogue between national NGOs, international organizations, and government authorities on the protection and assistance needs of IDPs in Nigeria.

A total of 59 participants attended the workshop: 34 participants represented different state emergency agencies, the National Commission for Refugees and regional state authorities from all over Nigeria; national and international non-governmental organizations sent 22 representatives and the UN system was represented by UNICEF and UNHCR (3 participants).

Opening Session

The Governor of Plateau State, Mr. Joshua Dariye, formally opened the workshop and delivered an opening address on behalf of the Nigerian Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (see annex 3). The Vice President's speech highlighted the cyclical character of displacement in Nigeria, the scope of which he estimated to be around 250,000 by the end of 2002. He further reminded the audience that on 19 June 2002, President Olusegun Obasanjo extended the mandate of the Nigerian National Commission for Refugees to also cover internally displaced persons. He continued saying that the UN Guiding Principles will provide the necessary framework for the "management and immediate response to the problem of internally displaced persons". The Vice President expressed his appreciation of the training support provided by NRC and hoped that both governmental and non-governmental participants would make efficient use of the training back in their regions and institutions.

Other opening speeches included the keynote address by the Minister for Special Duties, Mr. Yomi Edu which was read by the Chairman of the Governing Board of the NCFR, Ambassador Segun Olusola. The Minister also thanked the NRC and reiterated that the UN Guiding Principles “will serve as the founding block for the work of the Commission”. He went on to identify communal, ethnic and religious conflict, environmental degradation and natural disasters as the main causes triggering internal displacement in Nigeria.

Finally, Ambassador Olusola addressed participants and invited guests on behalf of the NCFR. He expressed the Commission’s gratitude to the Norwegian Refugee Council and emphasized the importance of the extensive non-governmental participation in the workshop. Ambassador Olusola also touched on some of the Commission’s activities out-lined for 2003, including:

- Development of a draft legal framework for IDPs
- Creation of a database on internal displacement
- Participation in community programmes on peace education, resettlement and re-integration



Ambassador Olusola

Introduction and legal background to the UN Guiding Principles

Following the opening statements participants were presented the background and the international context in which the Guiding Principles are currently being disseminated and implemented, including the role of the Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons, Dr. Francis M. Deng.

Next, the legal background to the Guiding Principles was presented in order for the participants to fully understand that the Principles restate and are consistent with existing international legal norms. It was also made clear that the Principles cover some important gaps in existing instruments, but mostly expand and make more explicit those provisions particularly applicable to IDPs. Also, the convenience and utility of including the IDP-relevant provisions in one accessible document was highlighted and demonstrated through a hands-on exercise during which participants traced individual principles to their sources in binding human rights law.

Most participants had limited knowledge of the UN Guiding Principles, prior to the workshop. However, at the end of the workshop everyone seemed to have a very good understanding of the Principles’ content and usefulness. Participants also understood their origin in binding international law and identified in their discussions parallels to human rights instruments such as the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Definitions: who is an IDP in Nigeria?

After a presentation of how the UN Guiding Principles provide a general definition of which categories of displaced people that the principles primarily apply to, the participants discussed various aspects that have to be taken into consideration when deciding who should

be counted as an IDP in Nigeria. This is an issue that needs due attention when developing Nigerian policy and legislation on internal displacement. Overall, the participants agreed that the definition in the Guiding Principles was valid for the Nigerian context. The recent displacement situation in Nigeria has not been caused by a traditional armed conflict between rebel forces and the government, but most often by communal violence of a nature referred to in the Guiding Principles as "generalized violence", "violations of human rights", as well as by "human made disasters". It will thus be relevant to give particular attention to such factors in an IDP definition tailored for the Nigerian context; although national legislation should not exclude other causes that may cause displacement in the future.



Several participants underscored that the circumstances that had forced people to flee their homes should be given more emphasis than duration when determining status as IDPs. In Nigeria, as in many other countries, it remains to discuss more in detail the official criteria for how to decide when people should no longer be considered to remain internally displaced. This may be clear in those cases where there is durable return to former homes or voluntary resettlement, but more difficult to decide when people have remained displaced

for several years. However, most participants agreed that a person was no longer an IDP if he or she had voluntarily integrated into the host community on a long term basis.

Main causes for forced displacement in Nigeria

Seeing that forced internal displacement in Nigeria is a re-occurring phenomenon, periodically challenging the response capacity of the authorities, the workshop tried to address this issue at some length. In order to identify preventive measures to conflict-induced forced displacement, participants were asked to discuss the immediate and, more importantly, the underlying causes of displacement. The immediate causes were easily identifiable and were divided into two categories:

- Generalized violence between communities and groups of people
- Violations of human rights

The first category refers to situations of violent conflict in which, state agents do not play a direct role, while the second describes acts tolerated, supported or carried out by agents of the Nigerian state (army, police, civil authorities, etc).

In order to better understand and address these immediate causes of displacement, participants were asked to identify and discuss in groups the underlying causes leading to violent conflict. As such, the groups discussed the following issues:

Conflict between “indigenes” and “settlers”

In Nigeria, a person’s status as “indigenes” or “settler” has an impact on access to public services like, for example, schooling and employment. According to participants, only an individual whose ethnic group or ancestors originate from the area is considered “indigenes”. A “settler” might have been born where he/she lives but will always be considered a “settler” because his/her ethnic group or ancestors do not origin from that particular area. Some participants argued that this distinction might be the most important root cause of internal

displacement in Nigeria - a factor which is often mixed with, or disguised behind, what appears to be ethnic or religious conflict. In fact, the “indigenes-settler” divide often coincides with the ethnic and religious divisions.

Participants found it somewhat unclear who actually decides who is “indigene” to a territory and who is a “settler”. Some participants referred to the constitution but were informed by colleagues that the distinction is determined by “culture and customs”. The group agreed that current practice shows that it is not enough to be born in a certain place to qualify as “indigenes”, and that it was unclear for how many generations your family would have to live in an area to be considered “indigenes”.

The same ambiguity prevailed around the issue of formally sanctioned benefits enjoyed by the “indigenes” population but not by the “settlers”. Participants explained that the school system in for example Jos has a quota system and a fee structure facilitating access for population considered “indigenes”. In practice, the same “indigenes-bias” applies to access to employment, particularly within the state institutions.

Participants pointed out that “settlers” pay taxes and are officially registered as residents just like “indigenes”. The local authorities receive federal funds based on the size of the population, including the “settlers”, but as mentioned before, these same “settlers” do not enjoy access to public services like schooling and employment on an equal basis with “indigenes”.

No consensus was reached on how to address this very important root cause of conflict and internal displacement. Some participants seemed to accept the current system as a legitimate practice related to customs and traditions. One participant saw it as a certain guarantee against possible changes of the local balance of power, which has been challenged by demographic changes caused by internal migration. Others pointed to the tension created by the current system and argued for a system in which anyone born or formally registered in a locality would have equal rights.

Ethnic conflict

Participants, representing many of Nigeria’s approximately 250 ethnic groups, agreed that so-called “ethnic” conflicts are often not primarily about ethnicity. Different actors tend to use ethnicity to rally support for their stand in a given dispute, which might in reality be about land, about a chieftain or about access to a large range of economic and/or political resources.

The workshop therefore highlighted the importance of properly analyzing the cause of the communal violence and addressing it accordingly. Participants suggested that true ethnic conflict could be addressed through:

- Increased participation in decision making processes by all ethnic groups
- Public awareness campaigns building on commonalities between ethnic groups rather than differences
- Equal opportunities to all ethnic groups and equal access socio-economic services
- Inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration on community projects
- Encouragement of inter-ethnic marriages
- Set-up of peace committees and inter-ethnic youth fora
- Investigation into ethnic violence and the trial and sentencing of perpetrators

Religious conflict

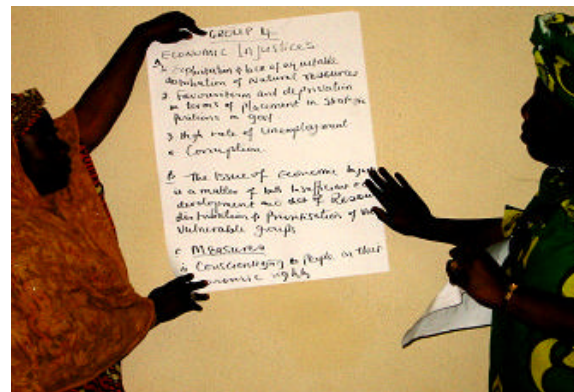
Just as in the case of ethnic conflict, participants emphatically stated that so-called “religious” conflict is often not primarily about religion. It was pointed out that for example members of the large ethnic group Hausa/Fulani are not always Muslims, but differences between them and other communities are often portrayed as religious. These differences are rather about community members’ status as “indigenes” or “settlers”, or over access to resources. Participants described the violence in the city of Jos in September 2001 as a typical conflict commonly described as religious, despite it being triggered by tension around the issue of “indigenes-settlers”. The same would apply to the violent crises in Kaduna state in 2000, which, according to participants, was disguised as a conflict over Sharia law. One participant claimed that there have been cases where politicians purposely stirred up sentiments between religious communities to distract attention from their own poor achievements in office.

Some concrete suggestions to avoid religious conflict were to:

- Avoid physical separation between religious communities in urban areas
- Convince media to make a positive contribution to inter-faith relations
- Make sure school curriculums include religious tolerance
- Promote inter-faith dialogue and joint community projects on all levels
- Address the role of idle youths in religious conflict
- Investigate and sentence those responsible for provoking religious conflict
- Promote a neutral stand by force recruited from the national army and the police (un-biased recruitment, proper training, investigation of biased intervention, etc.)

Economic injustices

Like in many other countries affected by internal displacement, participants identified economic injustices as a key cause behind conflict and displacement. As described above, this cause is often disguised and hidden in conflict portrayed as ethnic or religious. Participants agreed on the importance of stripping this kind of conflict of its disguise and addressing it for what it is. It was further suggested that in a developing nation like Nigeria, economic injustices have to be overcome both through increased development and a better distribution of existing resources. Vulnerable groups like IDPs need to be specifically prioritized.



Dispute over political boundaries

Participants explained that since 1999, access to political positions and civil servant posts has become more and more fiercely disputed as a source of economic and political power. The drawing up of new administrative boundaries, or the altering of old ones, often allow for an increase of the number of council members or the change of the political dominance from one group to another. A local government seat might be moved from one town to another, often benefiting a different ethnic group.

Changes to the political boundaries are also related to some politicians’ ambitions to create more ethnically and religiously homogeneous political territories. There was some

disagreement among participants on the appropriateness of such initiatives. Some argued that there is rather a need for increased cross-ethnic/religious interaction.

In general, changes to the political boundaries and creation of new territories have often led to conflict and displacement. Participants therefore argued that such changes should benefit the larger community rather than a specific group and have to be based on clear and transparent principles.

Protection from and during displacement

During this session participants were introduced to the Guiding Principles through four different themes:

- Non-discrimination
- Movement-related rights
- Physical security
- Humanitarian assistance

Non-discrimination

From the discussions in the groups it was clear that discrimination is rather a cause of displacement than a human rights violation suffered during displacement. Participants explained that most persons flee to areas where they identify ethnically or religiously with the host community and are therefore normally not subject to discrimination. However, as previously pointed out, discrimination as a result of the distinction between “indigenes” and “settlers” often leads to conflict and internal displacement.

Movement related rights

Given that the authorities estimate that approximately 250.000 persons were displaced at the end of 2002, the right to be protected from being displaced is clearly not respected. Next, participants discussed IDPs’ right to freedom of movement during displacement and agreed that there is formally full freedom of movement for IDPs in Nigeria, including the right to move freely in and out of camps. However, the security situation often does not allow displaced persons to move back to areas where they have been subject to violence and human rights violations. In this respect, it was suggested that the authorities have an obligation to not only respect but also to protect the right to freedom of movement when that right is violated by others. There is therefore a need to further enhance government efforts to establish a safe environment for displaced persons who want to return.

Physical security during displacement

Participants acknowledged that the physical security of Nigerians, including IDPs, is often violated. Killings, attacks and arbitrary detentions affect the entire population, but do not seem to be specifically directed at IDPs. However, one participant described how the IDP settlement Esuk Inwang in Akwa Ibom state had been violently attacked.

Next, a discussion ensued on how to best fulfill the right of family members of deceased victims to recuperate the remains of their loved ones (GP no.16.3). In Nigeria, when the corpses of victims have been sent to the person’s ethnic home area, the news of the killing of these persons has had a profound impact on that ethnic community, often leading to violent retaliation against other ethnic communities perceived to be the culprits. According to participants, this has lead the security forces to sometimes prohibit the transfer of corpses to the deceased persons’ areas of origin, in order to prevent retaliation.

On the issue of physical security, the workshop also discussed the need for Early Warning Mechanisms to prevent conflict and displacement. Participants argued that both civil society organizations and the different security and intelligence forces have access to detailed information, which should allow for concrete preventive measures. Unfortunately, this information is not sufficiently harnessed, coordinated and eventually acted upon. There is therefore a need for not only a coordinated Early Warning Mechanism but also an “Early Action Structure” making full use of the information.

Humanitarian assistance

Even though IDPs’ assistance needs could be more fully met, participants seemed to agree that the state authorities (including the National Emergency Agency, NEMA) together with the Red Cross, the faith-based organizations and the humanitarian NGOs have made substantial efforts to respond to the numerous displacement situations in the country. Limited access to funds is of course a constraint and new and increased sources of funding need to be identified. This is particularly true for the National Commission for Refugees, which has recently been requested to respond to not only refugees but also IDPs. This welcome, but drastic, increase in the agency’s target group needs to be accompanied by federal funding in order for the Commission to live up to the expectations placed on it.

During the discussion on humanitarian assistance, workshop participants acknowledged the challenges involved in delivering assistance. One participant told the story of how five humanitarian volunteers had been attacked and killed for trying to deliver assistance to a displaced community opposed by the attackers. This triggered a lively discussion on the usefulness of armed humanitarian escorts. A representative of Cross River State explained that NEMA in that state uses five armed mobile units to protect the agency when delivering relief. Other participants were less convinced, arguing that armed protection is more likely to trigger a violent reaction from the communities involved in the communal conflicts.

Protection needs of displaced children

It is important to note that protection is not only a question of protection from violence but relates to a wide set of factors that may undermine the physical well being of IDPs. As pointed out by several participants, large share of the IDPs are children and young people, who constitute a particularly vulnerable group. Displaced children not only need particular protection from violence and abuse, but are the group that suffers most severely from lack of food, poor health services, psychological stress and inadequate shelters. Although the right to education is well defined in Nigerian legislation, educational opportunities for displaced children are often lacking. However, positive examples of how some IDP camps were offering primary education (e.g. in Calabar) were also presented at the workshop. One participant expressed concern that the Guiding Principles do not sufficiently include clear guidelines for child protection and, unless particular attention is given to this issue, there is a risk that such a weakness may be replicated in a future Nigerian IDP legislation.

Durable solutions: return, resettlement and reintegration

This session was focused on how government agencies, state authorities and non governmental organizations could best facilitate successful reintegration of IDPs after they return to their homes or voluntary reintegrate elsewhere (i.e. resettlement).

In Nigeria it seems to be a pattern that displaced people are able to return to their homes after the violence and other dangers that forced them to flee no longer represents a major threat. However, an unknown number of IDPs apparently also resettle elsewhere or get assimilated into the communities that had given them shelter during their displacement. The latter must also be seen in the context of general movement patterns between the different Nigerian states and ethnic groups. In some cases, former neighbors have used looting and destruction of property as a tool to discourage return, while in other areas there are examples of local authorities actively guarding property until the IDPs return. Unfortunately, several participants indicated that such solidarity is on the decline.

The discussions indicated that Guiding Principles 28-30 would be a relevant basis for a future official policy on return/resettlement of IDPs in Nigeria. Several participants underscored in particular the need to involve IDPs more actively in the return process, and to inform better both IDPs and the communities where IDPs return or resettle about the approach taken and the role of national and international humanitarian actors. Those providing assistance in the return phase should pay attention to the potential tensions that access to humanitarian assistance can create between beneficiaries and their neighbors. International actors should thus acquire a better understanding of local conditions and practices before initiating humanitarian assistance activities.

Recommendations

- (1) The right of people in Nigeria to be protected from forced displacement and to be assisted during all phases of displacement should be reflected in government legislation, policies and operational guidelines.
- (2) The national legal framework for assistance and protection of IDPs should be in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and should be harmonized with Nigerian refugee law.
- (3) It should be considered to invite competent international institutions, like the IDP Unit of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), other UN agencies or NGOs to provide technical assistance in the development of legislation and policies.
- (4) Effective mechanisms for coordination of IDP protection and assistance should be developed, including the delineation of responsibilities between the relevant public institutions at the federal- and state levels.
- (5) Future IDP legislation and policies must give proper attention to the particular needs of children for physical protection and humanitarian assistance.
- (6) Future IDP legislation, policies and the set-up of operational structures should be effectively disseminated to all stakeholders.
- (7) Early warning systems with involvement of all stakeholders and effective lines of communication between the local, state and federal levels must be established and closely linked to local conflict mediation mechanisms.
- (8) In order to prevent future displacement, the immediate and underlying causes behind communal violence must be addressed and openly discussed, including discrimination related to the division between “indigenes” or “settlers”, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, economic injustices and disputes over political boundaries.

- (9) Conflict resolution should be pursued through increased inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue. Ideally, such dialogue should translate into concrete activities and projects designed and implemented by representatives of different ethnic and religious communities.
- (10) Participants stressed the need to thoroughly investigate and prosecute perpetrators and instigators of violence, in order to avoid a circle of impunity and renewed violence.
- (11) National and international humanitarian actors should be enabled access to internally displaced people in Nigeria, and should be encouraged to implement operational activities in favor of IDPs. Concretely, UNHCR was asked to extend its mandate to also cover internal displacement in Nigeria and NRC was recommended to establish a country programme in the country.
- (12) Government authorities should facilitate systematic and effective reintegration of IDPs either when returning to their original places of residence or when voluntarily resettling in another part of Nigeria. This should be undertaken with the active involvement of all stakeholders.
- (13) The social and legal responsibilities of members of the business community should be ensured, including the prevention of economic activities indirectly or directly causing displacement.

Annex 1: List of Participants

GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS (34)	
Adikpo Agbatse	SEMA (Benue State)
Aisha M. Jaji (Mrs.)	NCFR
Alh. Al-Hassan M. Barde	Plateau State Emergency Relief & Mgt. Agency, Jos
Aliyu Jumare	Kaduna state Ministry of Environment & N/Resources (MENR), Kaduna State
Anionwu, F.O. (Mr.)	NCFR, Abuja
Ashby Balogun	Dept. of State Service, Jos
B.I. Etim-Ikang	NCFR
Bar. E.i. Akpabio	Emergency Mgt. Committee Dept. Govt. Office AKS
Bassy Patrick Coco	Bakassi L.G.
C.I. Ejimadu	NCFR
Dauda m. Birdeka	Gsera Gombe State
Dr. C.O. Odunze	Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA)Umuahia
Dr. O.O. Ojiji	IPCR (Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution -- The Presidency) Abuja
Dr. Z. Mohammed	NEMA, the Presidency, Abuja
Dunny Afolabi	NCFR
Esther Yakubu	NCFR, Abuja
Felicia Lordye	Concern Universal
Fibi Iddo	Plateau State Emergency Relief & Mgt. Agency, Jos
Ladan Umar	NCFR, Abuja
Mohammed F. Babayo	SEMA, Bauchi
Mrs. Phobeb Iddo	Plateau State Emergency Magt. Agency
Nasiru Ismaila	NCFR
Nonye Nwachukwu	NCFR, Abuja
Odey Pauline Oko	NCFR, Abuja
Opara Joyce N.	NCFR
Ote, Hyacinth U.	State Emergency Preparedness and Response, Ebonyi State, SSGS office
P.J. Leasado	Adamawa State Govt.
Prince B.B. Ajibose	NCFR
Professor Inyang, Inyang Ekpe	Bakassi L.G.
Ramatu L. Usman	NCFR, Maiduguri
Ruth Moji	D.S.S Plateau State
S.E. Okoh	Delta SERA
Vincent E. Aquah	SEMA-Calabar
Yegwa, Lawrence Ogbaj	NCFR
NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPANTS (23)	
Abdullahi, Y. Sule	YEDA- KanoYouth and Environmental Dev. Asso.
Adamu Ibrahim	Int. Agency for Displaced Persons and Refugees
Adeooti Mary Omolola	JDPC-Caritas, Abuja
Akuse John	Concern Universal
Alexander P. Noah	Nig. Ass. Of Social Workers, Lagos.
Appolos Hamman	GCDA - Gombe
Capt. Joseph C. Mbagwu	The salvation Army, Abuja

Carol Osborne	ICRC
Echegu Philomena	Human Rights Centre
Felicia Iordye	Concern Universal
Hanatu L. Ibrahim	AREF, African Refugees Foundation Lagos.
Imam M.N. Ashafa	Inter-Faith Mediation Centre
Imran Abdulraham	Centre for Peace Initiative and Development (CEPID), Jos, Plateau State
Joseph A. Sangosanya	Foundation for Social Justice and equity
Modupe Omopintemi	Save the Children UK
Nwadikwah Jennifer I.	Child's Right Brigade/Women Arise, Calabar
Nwanedo Barth Onyema	Caritas, Nigeria
Pastor J.M. Wuye	Inter-Faith Mediation Centre
Steve Aluvo	Civil Liberties Organisation-Jos
Sunday Adetoye Adeneye	Nigerian Red Cross, Lagos
Williams Chollom Kwang	(B.Y.M) National Body, Plateau State. B/Ladi Heipang)
Yohanna Iliya	CBD-NGO Forum
UNITED NATIONS (3)	
Maureen Zubie Okolo	UNICEF
Smith Josephine	UNHCR
Victor Okwunwa	UNICEF, Abuja

Annex 2: Workshop programme

Monday 17 th February	
09.30-12.00	Opening ceremony
12.30	Presentation of workshop participants, facilitators, objectives and agenda
12.30-13.00	Introduction to the Guiding Principles
13.15-14.00	Definition of Internally Displaced Persons (Module I)
14.00-15.30	Lunch
15.30-16.30	Basic Tenets of Internal Displacement
16.30-18.00	Legal Framework for the Protection of IDPs and International Obligations (Module II)
Tuesday 18 th February	
09.00-12.30	Protection of IDPs During Displacement (Module III)
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-16.30	Return and resettlement (Module IV)
Wednesday 19 th February	
09.00-11.00	Prevention of Displacement, Identification of Causes and how to address them
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.30	Conclusion and Recommendations
14.30	Press Conference and Issuing of Communiqué by Participants
16.00	Closure

Annex 3: Opening speeches

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT, ALHAJI ATIKU ABUBAKAR, TURAKIN ADAMAWA AT THE WORKSHOP ON UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT HELD AT JOS HILL STATION HOTEL ON 17th – 19th FEBRUARY, 2003.

Your Excellency, Governor of Plateau State
His Excellency, Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria
His Excellency, UNHCR Representative in Nigeria
Hon. Minister for Special Duties
Chairman, National Commission for Refugees
Hon. Federal Commissioner for Refugees
Members of National Assembly
Members of Plateau State House of Assembly
Members of Plateau State Executive Council
Plateau State Traditional Rulers Council
Representative of Norwegian Refugee Council
Participants
Members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am very pleased to be part of this occasion of a collaborative workshop on United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement organized by National Commission for Refugees in conjunction with the Norwegian Refugee Council.

2. Conflicts and disasters have been identified globally as the factors that hinder development and growth. In Nigeria, the magnitude and pattern of these phenomena is characterized by civil strife and communal violence, which have tremendously affected many parts of the country and unfortunately have retarded progress in the affected areas. It has also inflicted deep injuries in the minds of the people. In addition, it has disturbed peaceful co-existence and tranquility in hitherto peaceful communities. To worsen matters, they have also led to internal displacement.

3. The crises of internal displacement as we know today affect over 20 million people in the world Nigeria also has its unenviable share of more than 500,000 IDPs as at the end of 2001, while about 250,000 displaced persons are uprooted as at the end of 2002. The figure continues altering as one crisis is contained while another breaks out elsewhere.

4. One has expected conflicts amongst nations and people to end with the end of the Cold War, unfortunately, these hydra-headed monsters have now assumed internal character and a magnitude never known in the post-Second World War era particularly in the less developed countries of the world. Brothers and sisters who were living together peacefully for ages have suddenly discovered that they are separated by religion, culture and other issues and have drawn swords against one another. This has led to unprecedented violence and Nigeria has had its own share.

5. The Federal Government has not only condemned these atrocities, but has encouraged all state agencies and NGOs especially the National Commission for Refugees to train conflict managers and monitors, especially in the areas of internal displacement. On this basis, this National Workshop with participants representing over 50 governmental and non governmental agencies is therefore a laudable development.

6. It is therefore, my hope that this training workshop will provide our men and women in the government agencies and NGOs the opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and expertise for management of emergency situations, rehabilitating the displaced and techniques of predicting and forestalling conflicts through an appropriate Early Warning Mechanism (EWM) in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

7. The problems associated with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are enormous and challenging. The aftermath of internally generated conflicts brings sorrow, sadness isolation, grief, distress, anguish, anger hunger and colossal losses of lives and property. The affected communities and victims are de-ranged psychologically and these incapacitate them from not only participating and contributing to the process of nation building, but to the desired peace and security of the society.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

8. I wish once again to emphasize the determination of this administration to continue to work with relevant international agencies and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) in the care and maintenance of Internally Displaced Persons.

9. It is important to note that the Federal Government led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo is the first government in Nigeria's history to evolve a specific policy framework for the protection of the interest of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria. Disturbed by the plight of these unfortunate Nigerians, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo during the inauguration of the reconstituted Board of the National Commission for Refugees, on the 19th of June, 2002, tasked the Commission to look into the problems of the Internally Displaced.

10. I am happy to note that the Commission has taken up this challenge and has therefore asked the well-known Norwegian Refugee Council to assist in training Nigerians in this new field. This is very commendable

11. Let me use this opportunity to charge you, the participants in this memorable training workshop, to be good ambassadors of your agencies and organizations. The knowledge that will be acquired should germinate and be transplanted and transferred to others into your organizations norms and values. You should be in position to encourage the displaced and not to discriminate against those unfortunate citizens in our midst. The Internally Displaced Persons should be cared for, encouraged and supported not only to have daily living, but the hope of rehabilitation and reintegration back to his/her original place of inheritance. The ideas and knowledge you will acquire in this workshop should be an asset for resettlement, rehabilitation of the displaced and responding to emergencies.

12. The challenge posed by the problems of Internally Displaced Persons in the country is multi-dimensional and the National Commission for Refugees, which is charged with the responsibilities of their management and protection, is well aware of the task ahead. The training workshop is a path finding approach to unraveled different strategies towards preparation of a workable programme of activities for the resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons. The Commission should work hard to actualize the objective of government in not only rehabilitating and resettlement of the displaced, but should work in collaboration with other related agencies in proper and genuine reconciliation of the victims. In this regard, the local government authorities, the traditional rulers, the community leaders and well meaning Nigerians have greater role to play in the maintenance of peace and stability in their domains.

13. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which is the "theme of this National Workshop, will provide the necessary apparatus needed for management and immediate response to the problems of Internally Displaced persons in emergencies. The displaced persons should not lose hope; the belligerent groups should shed their swords and embrace the philosophy of peace. This is the key to stability and national unity. Development can only thrive in a conducive environment, hostility dispels growth and retards progress.

14. Distinguished Participants, I wish you a successful participation in this important National Workshop.

Thank you.

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR SPECIAL DUTIES,
MR. YOMI EDU
ON THE OCCASION OF FORMAL OPENING OF TRAINING WORKSHOP
ON INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS [IDPS]
FROM 17TH- 19TH FEBRUARY, 2003
AT HILL STATION HOTEL - JOS, PLATEAU STATE**

Your Excellency, The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Your Excellency, Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria,
Your Excellency, the Governor of Plateau State,
The Chairman of National Commission for Refugees,
The distinguished Representative of the UNHCR in Nigeria,
Hon. Commissioner of National Commission for Refugees,
Special Invitees,
Hon. Representatives of Norwegian Refugees Council,
Distinguished Participants,
Media Representatives,
Ladies & Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst today at this maiden Workshop on UN Guidelines on Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs]. The hosting of this Workshop at this time is very auspicious as there is currently a spate of internal displacement within the country as in several other countries of the world.

Very often the major causes of large-scale internal population displacements include, but are not limited to, communal, ethnic and religious conflicts, environmental degradation, natural disasters and from our most recent experience explosions.

Although these are involuntary internal displacements, the consequences of the dislocations are monumental. Therefore, there is need for developing a long-term programme for the care, maintenance, resettlement and re-integration of the IDPs.

I have been told that the Norwegian Refugee Council has co-sponsored similar Workshops in over 20 countries in different continents of the world. I therefore thank the country for deeming it fit to collaborate with the National Commission for Refugees with this important skill acquisition programme relating to the United Nations guiding Principles on internal displacement. In the absence of international legal framework for the protection of IDPs, these guiding principles will serve as the founding blocks for the work of the Commission.

The active engagement of the National Commission for Refugees in the prevention and management of Internally Displaced Persons was on the directive of Mr. President on the inauguration of the Governing Board in June last year.

Government has since directed the active collaboration of both the National Commission for Refugees and the National Emergency Management Agency in such vital areas of intervention where National Emergencies & Disasters directly lead to the proliferation of internal displacement.

Since population displacement can occur at anytime, a training workshop of this nature and other training programmes for managers and operators of IDPs programmes become very vital.

As a point of departure, the UN Guidelines are to be applied to specific cases especially as they relate to the protection of IDPs I have noted the objectives of the workshop which include:

- To introduce the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and to analyse the displacement situation in Nigeria, using the Principles as a point of departure
- To access the current state of implementation of the Guiding Principle in Nigeria.
- To promote dialogue between government authorities, non-governmental organizations and international bodies on the Protection and Assistance needs of IDPs Dn Nigeria

- To encourage organizations working with IDPs to share among themselves their work experience and best practices

I commend the Norwegian Refugees Council for collaborating with the Nigerian National Commission for Refugees in mounting this workshop. I have no doubts that at the end of the workshop participants will be able to:-

[i] Know about Early Warning Mechanisms;

[ii] Identify Internal Displacements;

[iii] Assist in providing succour to the IDPs and assist the IDPS to assist themselves.

[iv] Provide the needed protection and assistance to IDPs in accordance with the UN Guidelines on Internal Displacement.

In concluding, I wish to reiterate the need for peaceful coexistence. I see the devising of ways to bring people back together as a major role of humanitarian and development actors. The co-existence of people in economic and social activities that are continually beneficial have been found to be a bigger unifying factor and a repellent to Internal Displacement.

The protection needs of the IDPs and the vulnerable who are mainly women, children and the elderly are of paramount importance to this administration. We all have a collective responsibility to assist victims of man-made and natural disasters with the provision of basic human needs and to contribute to early warning and information system.

Once again, I thank the organizers for mounting this workshop, which in no small way will benefit the National Commission for Refugees, and the Nigerian populace.

Thank you.

**A WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN GOVERNING BOARD OF THE NATIONAL
COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES,
AMBASSADOR SEGUN OLUSOLA, mni,
ON THE OCCASION OF FORMAL OPENING OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS [IDPs] FROM 17th - 19th FEBRUARY, 2003
AT HILL STATION HOTEL, JOS**

Your Excellency, The Vice President,
Your Excellency, the Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria,
Your Excellency, The Executive Governor of Plateau State,
The UNHCR Representative in Nigeria,
Hon. Minister for Special Duties,
Hon. Federal Commissioner for Refugees,
Members of the National Assembly,
Plateau State Traditional Council,
Representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council,
Participants,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I, on behalf of the National Commission for Refugees welcome you to this training workshop on Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs] jointly organized by the Commission and the Norwegian Refugee Council. This workshop has come especially at this time when internal displacement has become a pronounced phenomenon in our body polity

In June 1999, barely one month into the life of this administration/ this Commission in its programmes for the year 1999, Refugee Day celebration, held a workshop titled, "Preventing Large Scale Population Displacement: The Role of Democracy and Stagemanship" The occasion was presided over by the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. Ever since, the issue of Internal Displacement has continued to be the source of not only to government but also to voluntary and Non-governmental organizations.

No wonder, the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo at the inauguration of the reconstituted Board of National /Commission for Refugees on the 19th June 2002, raised the pertinent question, as to why the protection and assistance to the numerous Internally Displaced Persons in our country should not be handled by the National Commission for Refugees.

Following this directive, the Commission undertook fact-finding missions to five states, namely, Plateau, Benue, Anambra, Rivers and Cross Rivers. Our findings revealed that the spate of internal displacements has assumed greater dimension hence justifying the need for long term solutions to the problems of the Internally Displaced.

We are today, through this workshop, privileged to tap from the wealth of experience of the Norwegian Refugee Council in working out the appropriate legal aid institutional frameworks for the protection of IDPs in Nigeria. I therefore, thank the authorities of the Norwegian Refugee Council for availing the National Commission for Refugees and the various participants no only the opportunity to be more informed about the United Nation's guidelines on Internally Displaced Persons but also to become better managers on issues of IDPs. Since government alone cannot do everything for the citizenry, the involvement of voluntary and Non-Governmental Organisations in this workshop becomes more salutary.

Although, the base line statistics on IDPs is yet to be comprehensively collected, the Commission intends to create this database during the course of year 2003 though the crude statistics put the number of IDPs at over 300,000.

As the Commission will also be involved in such long-term programmes on community peace education, resettlement and re-inlegration of IDPs, may I use this opportunity to appeal for appropriate funding of these programmes by the relevant authorities.

May I at this juncture express our gratitude to the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar [Turakin Adamawa], the Hon. Minister for Special Duties, our host, the Governor of Plateau State, the representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and that of the Norwegian Refugee Council for the support and encouragement given to the Commission. We also send our appreciation to participating agencies, groups and individuals at this national workshop.

Once again, I welcome you to this workshop and wish you successful deliberation.

Thank you for your attention.