



MANUAL ON FIELD PRACTICE IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

**Examples from UN Agencies
and Partner Organizations
of Field-based Initiatives Supporting
Internally Displaced Persons**

**Inter-Agency Standing Committee
Working Group**

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FOREWORD

Populations that suffer systematic violations of their basic human rights are frequently forced to abandon their homes and seek refuge either within their own country or across an international border. Although it is not a new phenomenon, over the past decade the problem of forced displacement has become larger, more complex, and geographically more widespread. Internally displaced persons are by definition those who remain within their own borders and thus responsibility for their protection rests, first and foremost, with national governments and local authorities. But all too often governments are either unwilling or unable to meet the protection needs of their displaced populations. The international community, therefore, has an important responsibility to ensure that these populations are assisted. This responsibility should not be limited to the provision of humanitarian assistance, but must include effective safeguarding of all rights guaranteed by international humanitarian and human rights law. In today's crisis zones strategies for reinforcing the protection of vulnerable populations must go alongside the delivery of humanitarian assistance. This dual approach will help to promote the stability required for their long-term recovery.

The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, presented by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons to the Commission on Human Rights in April 1998, represent a major step forward in promoting standards for protection and assistance to internally displaced persons. The *Principles* identify the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of displaced persons in all phases of displacement. This new *Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement* is intended to support efforts by governments and agencies to implement the *Guiding Principles*. It complements the *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on*

Internal Displacement, which has been published as a companion to this volume and which explains the *Guiding Principles* in nontechnical language. This *Manual on Field Practice* describes a number of concrete activities that may be undertaken in situations of internal displacement so as to strengthen the link between assistance and protection activities. In reflecting the experiences of United Nations agencies as well as international organisations and nongovernmental organisations, the manual will provide guidance to a broad range of government and agency staff.

Providing an effective and comprehensive system of response to the needs of internally displaced persons around the world remains a daunting task that calls for a concerted effort under the leadership of the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator in collaboration with the Representative of the Secretary-General. This *Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement* demonstrates that something can be done and is being done by creative and courageous organisations—international and local—as well as by the displaced themselves. I am confident that it will prove a useful tool for field personnel and programme planners looking for measures with which to address the needs of internally displaced persons in different situations around the world.

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