

FAO's Approach to Addressing Forced Displacement

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Forced displacement crises – including those involving refugees, IDPs, and returnees – entail humanitarian, development and peace challenges that require food security, resilience-building, and peace-responsive interventions at an early stage. Out of the 123.2 million people displaced globally, approximately 23.9 million are located in both rural and urban areas across the **Horn and Central Africa**, where agriculture activities (production, transformation and commercialization of agriculture products) are the backbone of local economies.

Sudan alone hosts over 10 million IDPs (the highest number globally) while neighboring countries host more than **3 million Sudanese refugees**. Additionally, nearly **800 thousand former refugees** have returned to Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Chad, among other countries¹.

The humanitarian impact is severe: in Sudan, between October and November 2024, famine struck five regions, including Zamzam, Abu Shouk, and Al Salam IDP camps in North Darfur. According to the IPC populations tracking tool², over **60 percent of the assessed IDP camps were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above)**, while in **Zamzam IDP camp alone, 95 percent** of the assessed population was in **IPC Phase 3+**. In neighboring countries, **refugees, returnees and host communities face alarmingly high rates of malnutrition and food insecurity**.³ For example, **nine out of nine assessed camps in Chad**, in the provinces of Ennedi Est, Ouaddai, Sila and Wadi Fira, which host large Sudanese refugee populations, **are highly food insecure** (IPC Phase 3 and above), according to the March 2025 IPC report.⁴

Many Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan come from agricultural backgrounds, bringing with them valuable skills and experience in farming and rural livelihoods. Despite this, displaced populations are often among the most food-insecure and vulnerable in the region, and their numbers continue to rise. The loss of access to land and agricultural inputs are just the beginning of the barriers that compromise resilience, and limit agriculture activities for displacement affected communities.

FAO plays a critical role in supporting both displaced and host communities to restore and rebuild agriculture-based livelihoods. As a key actor in implementing the humanitarian–development–peace nexus (HDPN) approach, FAO places agricultural interventions at the centre of its efforts to enable Durable Solutions to displacement.

¹ <https://developmentactionrefugees.org/sudan-regional-response>

² [SD-IPC-Analysis-Acute-Food-Insecurity-October-2024.xlsx](#)

³ [Hunger Hotspots. FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: June to October 2025 outlook](#)

⁴ [IPC Chad Acute Malnutrition Oct2024_Sept2025_Report_French.pdf](#)

FAO's Durable Solutions Approach

FAO's work on forced displacement is anchored in resilience building and early recovery through agricultural livelihoods. This is done by targeting interventions at five levels:

Figure 1: FAO's Comprehensive Durable Solutions Approach



Source: FAO's institutional plan to address internal displacement (internal document).

- 1. Agricultural Livelihoods, Food and Nutrition Security:** FAO's comprehensive agricultural livelihoods approach is central to its efforts in enabling Durable Solutions for displaced populations. Adaptable to each displacement context, it integrates immediate humanitarian support with longer-term, forward-looking interventions that restore and strengthen the self-reliance, inclusion, and resilience of both displaced populations and their host communities. It provides people (whether they have an agricultural background or not) with the tools, skills, and opportunities to (re)build sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods, to address acute food and nutrition insecurity and lay the ground for income generation and local social cohesion. This holistic support ranges from the provision of inputs, training through Farmer Field Schools, and inclusion in local value chains, to the rehabilitation of productive infrastructure, promotion of inclusive natural resource governance, among other interventions depending on the context.
- 2. Climate Resilience and Adaptation:** Rural communities are exceptionally vulnerable to climate change due to their dependence on natural resources, climate-sensitive livelihoods, and limited access to economic safety nets. This vulnerability is exacerbated by displaced populations, an increasing proportion of which are displaced due to climate-related events. FAO mainstreams climate resilience and adaptation into its forced displacement-related programming, in programming that responds to displacement after it has occurred, and programming that can contribute to preventing displacement in the first place.

Figure 2: FAO's Comprehensive Approach to Agricultural Livelihoods



Source: FAO's institutional plan to address internal displacement (internal document).

3. Anticipatory Action and Disaster Risk Reduction: Shocks (whether natural or man-made) threaten the viability of agriculture and livestock-based livelihoods. FAO works to increase the resilience of agrifood systems to shocks such as droughts, floods, pests, animal disease, and market volatility. By using early warning systems, anticipatory action and disaster preparedness, FAO helps reduce risks of displacement and protects displaced populations from disasters.

4. Natural Resource Management: Competition over natural resources in displacement settings can exacerbate tensions, drive further displacement and undermine Durable Solutions. FAO supports sustainable and inclusive natural resource management structures at both the community, local and national levels. This includes mediation over water and land rights, community-based natural resource governance, and integrated land-use planning to reduce environmental degradation and conflict.

5. Peace Contributions: FAO ensures that all Durable Solutions-oriented actions adhere to the "do no harm" principle, while proactively seeking opportunities to contribute to peace. FAO's localized, community-based interventions support social cohesion and peaceful co-existence

between displaced and host communities. This is carried out through conflict-sensitive and peace-responsive programming, including joint livelihoods activities and dialogue platforms designed to resolve resource-related tensions and foster mutual trust.

FAO complements its core priorities with strong data systems tailored to displacement contexts. It designs dedicated assessments and ensures data collection tools are disaggregated by displacement status. For example, FAO has integrated a displacement and conflict module into its [Data in Emergencies \(DIEM\)](#) system to better understand and respond to the specific needs of displaced populations. In Chad, for example, FAO conducted an assessment on “[The impact of conflict and displacement on agricultural livelihoods and food security in eastern Chad](#)” (February 2025).

Programming Examples

Uganda and Kenya – Inclusive Value Chains for Refugees and Hosts

In Uganda’s Kiryandongo and Kenya’s Kalobeyei refugee settlements, FAO implemented a comprehensive livelihoods project with support from the IKEA Foundation, in close collaboration with UNHCR, local government structures, local implementing partners, and private sector actors. The initiative aimed to strengthen the self-reliance of refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, and the DRC, and their host communities inclusive through value chain development. The project reached 3 865 households, or around 19 000 individuals.

In Uganda, an inclusive passion fruit value chain was developed. Refugees and host community members received training on climate-smart and good agricultural practices and were provided with high-quality seeds (including passionfruit, vegetables and staples) and poultry to improve food security and diversify income sources. Joint Farmer Field Schools brought together refugees and host community members, promoting social cohesion and mutual learning. In Kenya, the intervention focused on a groundnut-based value chain, supported by shade-net horticulture, small-scale irrigation systems, and enhanced market linkages. Across both countries, the project incorporated climate adaptation practices such as water conservation and sustainable land use.

Overall, the combination of capacity building, improved access to markets, and value chain development, had clear impacts on the income generating capacities, food security and nutrition, as well as social cohesion between the displaced, and host communities. Refugees and host communities were able to produce enough to eat and sell in markets, with positive impacts on the local economies. As such, FAO's intervention laid the groundwork for enabling long term Durable Solutions.

Chad – Supporting Food Security and Women’s Empowerment Amid Displacement

In response to the Sudanese crisis and the arrival of refugees and returnees in Eastern Chad, FAO is implementing a project in Wadi Fira province, funded by the Government of Japan. The intervention targets 700 Sudanese refugee, Chadian returnee, and host community households (approximately 4 200 individuals in total), with the aim of restoring agriculture-based livelihoods, improving food and nutrition security, and empowering women and youth. The project takes a multi-modality approach by providing climate-resilient agricultural and livestock inputs, conditional cash assistance through

Cash for Work, and technical and gender-transformative training. It also includes the rehabilitation of key productive infrastructure, such as wells and vaccination parks, and supports the dissemination of market and climate information. A strong emphasis is placed on women's empowerment and fostering social cohesion, helping to reduce tensions between displaced, returnee and host populations.

Sudan – Livelihood Recovery for Conflict-Affected Communities

This project, funded by Switzerland, supports 800 000 people including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees, host, and non-hosting communities across 12 conflict-affected states in Sudan. Refugees and returnees are prioritized in areas like White Nile, Sennar, and Darfur, where displacement has surged due to conflict. The project delivers emergency agricultural inputs, livestock support, and cash-based assistance. Interventions include seed distributions, veterinary campaigns and climate-resilient farming training. Particular focus is placed on supporting female-headed households and youth, enhancing food security, income generation, and social cohesion while supporting Durable Solutions in both rural and displacement-affected contexts.

Eritrea - CERF Rapid Response 2024

FAO, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture of Eritrea, is implementing an emergency project to support 30 000 rural households (147 000 people) in Anseba, Gash Barka, and Maekel regions. This includes 3 675 Sudanese refugees and 13 475 Eritrean returnees displaced by conflict in Sudan. The project aims to protect livelihoods and food security through the distribution of animal feed, improved seeds and tools, and energy-saving stoves for vulnerable women. Training in agronomic and home economics practices will further build resilience.

Uganda - Emergency livelihoods and clean cooking support for new arrival refugees in Kiryandongo

In response to the high influx of Sudanese refugees into Uganda's Kiryandongo District, FAO is implementing a project to safeguard food, nutrition, and energy security among the newly arrived refugees. The project targets 12,500 refugees and host communities, including 3,750 of the most vulnerable of both groups, such as female-headed households, expectant and lactating women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

The project aims at improving the food and nutrition security of the targeted population by restoring productive capacities by providing emergency agricultural livelihoods assistance (seeds, tools, post-harvest materials, chicken, poultry feed and feeding tools). In addition, to address energy insecurity, the project distributes energy-saving cooking solutions and promotes awareness on sustainable cooking practices.

In coordination with the Government of Uganda, Local Institutions and UNHCR, the project contributes to the transition of new arrival refugees toward self-reliance.

Partnerships

FAO collaborates closely with key agencies through formal agreements and joint initiatives:

- **UNHCR** – Under a global MoU, FAO and UNHCR have a long history of delivering joint programming, advocacy and global level partnerships. FAO and UNHCR have jointly developed the “Agriculture for Refugee Resilience, Inclusion and Solutions” regional programme covering Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.
- **IOM** – Under a global MoU, FAO and IOM are exploring data collaboration, including linking IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) with FAO’s Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM) system. FAO and IOM have a long history of collaboration in programming, particularly around Peace Building Fund (PBF) projects.
- **IDMC** – FAO has maintained a strong partnership with IDMC since the 2023 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), which focused on food security, and to which FAO contributed with a background paper. Joint work has included a food security analysis of IDPs in Somalia, with a recent study exploring the socioeconomic impacts of internal displacement in Nigeria.

FAO’s Engagement in Global Displacement Forums

FAO actively engages in global policy and coordination platforms:

- At the 2023 **Global Refugee Forum (GRF)**, FAO spearheaded the development of a [Multi Stakeholder Pledge \(MSP\) on Agriculture, Food Systems and Food Security](#), together with UNHCR, WFP and the Government of Norway. The MSP harnesses commitments from various host countries around development of inclusive agricultural value chains and provision of land for refugees, including Chad. FAO made corporate commitments to strengthen programming, coordination, and data systems related to displacement.
- Under the **UN Secretary General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement**, FAO has an institutional plan with corporate commitments to strengthen programming, organizational coordination, as well as data analysis and systems related to durable solutions. As of 2025, FAO continues to engage with the Global Solutions Hub and related coordination structures.

Audiovisual and Communication Materials

- **Videos and photos:**
 - [Uganda and Kenya | Fostering refugees’ inclusion and self-reliance to promote peace and contribute to social-cohesion | Flickr](#)
 - [Towards durable solutions: The transformative power of agriculture in refugee settings.](#)
 - [Mary’s story: Investing in agricultural livelihoods to support refugee and host communities](#)
 - [Prisca’s story: agricultural livelihoods change lives for refugee and host communities](#)
 - [Betty’s story: Investing in agricultural livelihoods to support refugee and host communities - YouTube](#)
 - [Miriam’s story: Investing in agricultural livelihoods to support refugee and host communities](#)
- **Good practices, publications and assessments:**



- [The transformative role of agriculture in refugee settings – amplifying the voices of refugees and host communities](#)
- [Building durable solutions for refugees and host communities through inclusive value chain development in Uganda](#)
- [Towards Durable Solutions: FAO's programming in forced displacement contexts.](#)
- [Food insecurity among internally displaced people in Somalia - Trends analysis over time \(2017–2024\)](#)
- [Anticipatory action interventions to mitigate the effects of drought and migration on food security in Colombia](#)
- [Agricultural livelihoods as a pathway for durable solutions | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR](#)
- [Land Availability, Accessibility and Use by Internally Displaced People \(IDPs\), Returnees and the Host Communities in Cabo Delgado and Nampula Provinces, Mozambique](#)