TASK FORCE ON DISPLACEMENT
UDPATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN ACTIVITY AREA III

Activity III.1

Providing an overview of data sources, common methodologies and good practice for displacement-related data collection and assessment, as relevant to different contexts and region.

Accounting for displacement associated with disasters

The only global data set on disaster displacement currently available is the one provided by IDMC, monitoring and collecting information for all reported disasters from governments, the UN, IFRC and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, NGOs and international media outlets. IDMC applies no threshold when doing so, either in terms of the number of people displaced or the distance they have travelled. Its database includes records of one up to 15 million IDPs.

Here are a few lessons from IDMC's work on data sources, common methodologies and good practice for disaster displacement data collection, collation and analysis.

Estimates for displacement associated with disasters are best generated by event rather than by country. We generate a single "new displacement" estimate for the total number of people displaced by each event. It is important to note that this figure is not necessarily the same as the peak number of IDPs, but instead aims to provide the most comprehensive cumulative figure for those displaced with minimal double-counting.

We try to collect data from a number of reports on the same disaster, each specifying whether its figures refer to individuals or households, the reporting terms and sources used, the publisher, the title of the source document and the date of publication. When possible we triangulate the figures using competing reports. Sometimes, however, our estimates are derived from a single report. In others, they are the aggregation of a number of reports that together cover the wide geographical area affected.

This dataset allows us to better interpret the context of the figure in each report. In determining our estimates, it is vital that the data selected represents the most comprehensive figure from the most reliable source available for that event at the time when data was collected.

Reporting bias
We are aware that our methodology and data may be subject to different types of reporting bias, some of which are detailed below. Unequal availability of data: Global reporting tends to emphasise large events in a small number of countries where international agencies, funding partners and media have a substantial presence, or where there is a strong national commitment and capacity to manage disaster risk and collect information.
Under-reporting of small-scale events: These are far more common, but less reported on. Disasters that occur in isolated, insecure or marginalised areas also tend to be under-reported because access and communications are limited.

"Invisible" IDPs: There tends to be significantly more information available on IDPs who take refuge at official or collective sites than on those living with host communities and in other dispersed settings. Given that in many cases the vast majority fall into the second category, figures based on data from collective sites are likely to be substantial underestimates.
Real-time reporting is less reliable, but later assessments may underestimate: Reporting tends to be more frequent but less reliable during the most acute and highly dynamic phases of a disaster, when peak levels of displacement are likely to be reached. It becomes more accurate once there has been time to make more considered assessments.

Estimates based on later evaluations of severely damaged or destroyed housing will be more reliable, but they are also likely to understate the peak level of displacement, given that they will not include people whose homes did not suffer severe damage but who fled for other reasons.

Our estimates for some disasters are calculated by extrapolating from the number of severely damaged or destroyed homes or the number of families in evacuation centres. In both cases we multiply the housing and family data by the average number of people per household.

Estimating average household size
Primary sources often report the number of homes rendered uninhabitable or the number of families displaced, which we convert into a figure for IDPs by multiplying the numbers by the average household size (AHHS). There is,however, no universal dataset with updated and standardised AHHS data for all countries.
Given the potentially significant influence of AHHS on our estimates, we have continued to update the data and methodology we use to calculate it. This year we used a linear extrapolation obtained with improved methodology developed for the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2016.

The AHHS and therefore our estimates are subject to a margin of error, which means that by applying a particular value we may underestimate or overestimate real figures. If possible we

review and update the AHHS every year and, as a general rule, when data is expressed in household or family units, we estimate the number of displaced people according to the AHHS for the year when the data is captured. This applies particularly to figures obtained from historical or retrospective research, notably in protracted or prolonged displacement cases where using a contemporary household size without accounting for demographic changes would have lead to an underestimate for an event that occurred in 2008

Evacuation data

We often use data on mandatory evacuations and people staying in official evacuation centres to estimate event-based displacement. This was the case for 8.4 million of the new displacements we reported on in 2016.

On the one hand, the number of people counted in evacuation centres may underestimate the total number of evacuees, as others may take refuge elsewhere. On the other, the number of people ordered to evacuate may overstate the true number, given that some are likely not to heed the order. The potential for such discrepancies is much greater when authorities advise rather than order evacuation, and as a result we do not incorporate such figures into our estimates.

Length and severity of displacement

In the absence of reliable reporting on returns, local integration and relocations, it is not currently possible to clearly determine the numbers, length and severity of displacement in a globally comparable manner. In fact, of all the time-series data we have recorded on our database, in only five of the more than 130 events did collection continue until the number of displaced people reached zero.

Two were in the Philippines, and the others were in Indonesia, Tonga and India. This represents a major blind spot, with significant implications for people who remain displaced but not counted, and those responsible for protecting them. The fact that data collection ended while people were still displaced in more than 130 displacements further underscores the need for much greater investment in monitoring displacement over time in all countries.

<u>Source of data</u>

IDMC does not collect primary data on internal displacement but relies on the data collected by a wide range of partners on the ground. The process of obtaining data on internal displacement remains a major challenge despite various UN General Assembly resolutions encouraging governments to collect and share their data with IDMC. In the context of disasters, we work more closely with national authorities, and UN agencies who collect data and report on events. However, media remains an important source of information for the triangulation of our figures or also "catching" small cases of displacements. In fact these "disasters" are not always the reported by the humanitarian community and countries have not always the capacity to collect information.

Fig 1. Disaster displacement data sources
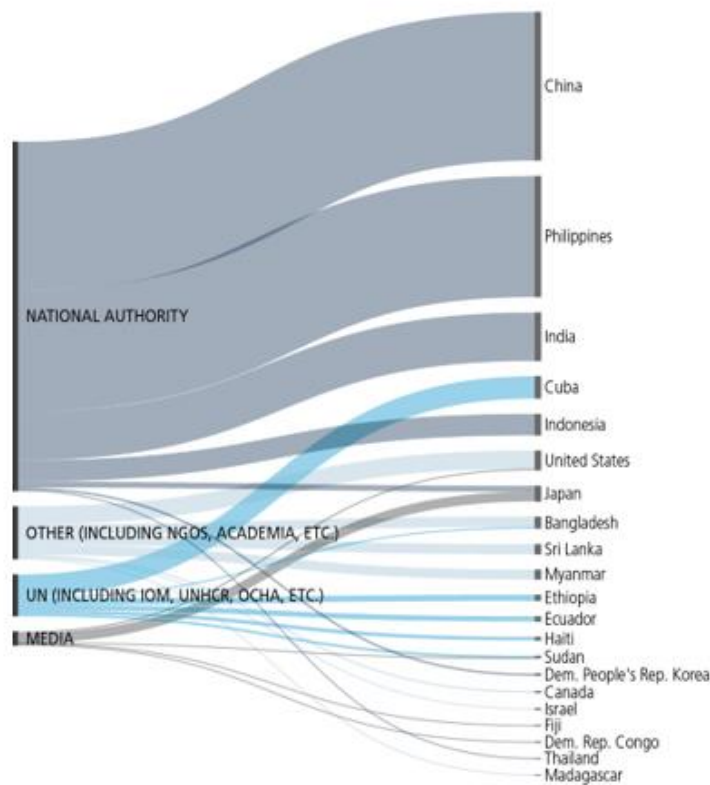
More than 1300 unique source of information have been registered in IDMC database, for both conflicts and disasters. Almost half of the sources rely to national authorities.

Fig 2. Disaster displacement data sources sources 2
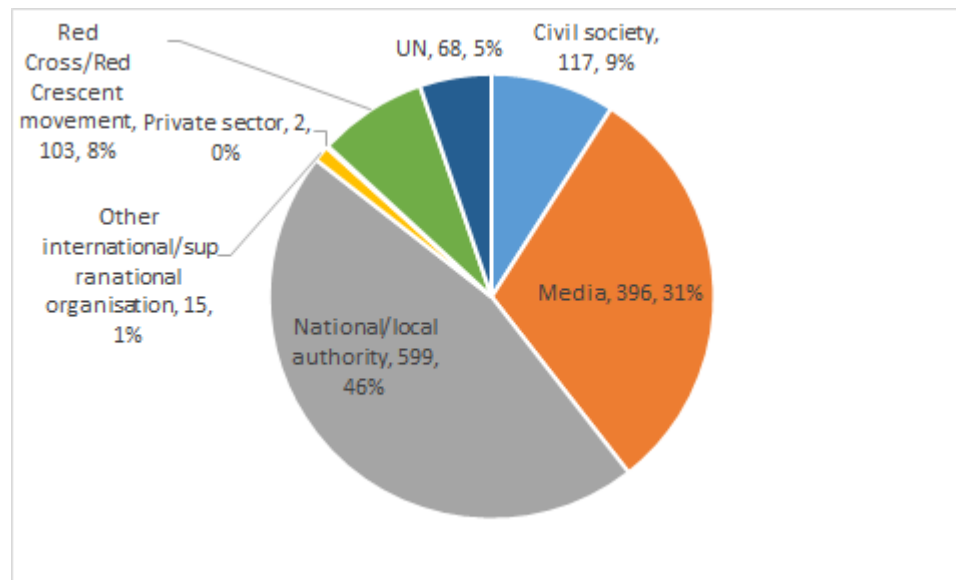
Looking only for disasters, more than 20% of the facts registered in our database belong to the Governments of the Philippines (10%) with DROMIC, Government of Indonesia (7%) with BNPB and Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) with 4%.

Publishers vs Sources

Sources and publishers are recorded in the database as the same kind of object. However, it is important to differentiate between them. The source originates an IDP figure. It is whoever counted, estimated, or stated the IDP figure. The publisher is the one responsible for the document and the one quoting the source, particularly if it's a media report. Or where the information is found and where the information is coming from quoted.

Fig3. Facts per type of publisher
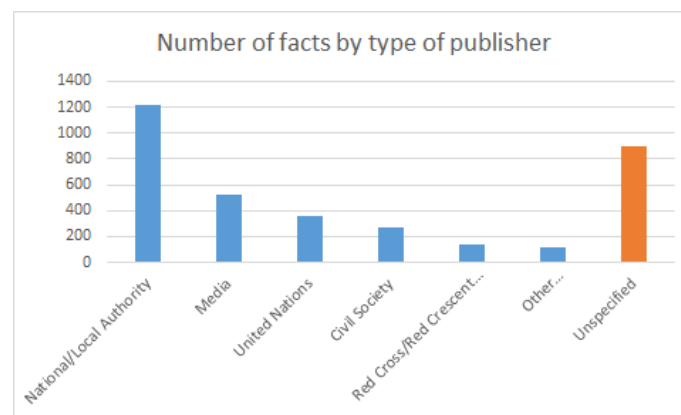
Despite our best efforts, the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) does not yet paint a comprehensive picture of internal displacement worldwide. This means that our global baseline is still a significant underestimate. Key gaps include the lack of data on all relevant phenomena, our limited ability both to obtain and analyse all of the information that does exist and to systematically identify new incidents of displacement. Without this information, we do not have an accurate measure of how many people have become internally displaced, the reasons they have fled and how long they remain displaced for.