

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: Forced Displacement in Africa, HC 1433

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Richard Burden; Mrs Pauline Latham; Chris Law; Lloyd Russell-Moyle; Henry Smith.

Questions 45-67

Witnesses

I: Professor Alexander Betts, Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs, University of Oxford.

Examination of witness

Witness: Professor Alexander Betts.

Q45 **Chair:** I welcome Professor Betts. Thank you very much for joining us today to give evidence as part of our Committee inquiry on forced displacement in Africa. Our general approach is that we go straight in to questions. Feel free to introduce yourself when you answer the first question. In “Refuge”, you argue for a new approach to global refugee policy. Could you give us a brief overview of what that new approach would look like?

Professor Betts: First of all, thank you very much to the Committee for inviting me. I am honoured and delighted to be here. By way of introduction, I am Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs at the University of Oxford and senior research fellow in politics at Brasenose College. Between 2014 and 2017 I was director of the Refugee Studies Centre, the largest specialised research centre focusing on forced displacement.

A lot of my research at the moment focuses very much on Africa, particularly on economic inclusion for refugees. How can we identify what drives outcomes for refugees, but also their socio-economic impact on the surrounding host communities and societies? In that work I am focusing on three countries at the moment, all in East Africa: Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. We have large research teams collecting qualitative and quantitative data, including training refugees themselves as peer researchers in camps and urban areas. It is a survey study encompassing around 15,000 refugee and host community respondents.

I also co-authored the book that you alluded to with Sir Paul Collier, “Refuge: Transforming a Broken Refugee System”. At its most simple, the argument in that book is that we need to help displaced people help themselves and contribute to their own communities, ideally until they can go home. To flesh that out, we argue that we should see refugees and displacement as a whole, not only as a humanitarian issue—which of course it is—but also as a development issue. Some 85% of the world’s refugees are in low and middle-income countries. We argue that it is in those countries that we should primarily look for solutions to the global refugee challenge.

For too long, the default solution has been camps—camps in which refugees are often denied the right to work and freedom of movement. They are often stuck for decades in those camp contexts. Understandably, many bypass those camps and go to overcrowded urban areas or embark on perilous onward journeys. Of course, we need to ensure food, clothing, shelter and basic assistance, but that is not enough by itself. Some refugees do have vulnerabilities, but they also have capacities, and that is where we place the emphasis. They have the potential to be self-sufficient if we provide them with the right support.



We argue that we need to create enabling environments in refugee-hosting areas, based on jobs and education, empowering refugees to have autonomy as well as dignity, supporting themselves and their communities until they are able to go home. We suggest that refugees do not have to be an inevitable burden on their host societies: they can be contributors if we let them. The key, though, is to ensure that development systems and, crucially, private sector investment, support new job opportunities, better public services and access to markets for the displaced and the surrounding host communities. The emphasis on the surrounding host communities is crucial. A good refugee policy has to be a good host community policy. With the right policies we can create win-win opportunities for refugees, host countries and donors. It may also reduce onward migration, but the ideal way to achieve that is by building anchors, not walls; helping people to remain in their regions, being adequately protected and assisted, not by building walls. We argue that that is the basis on which we can create sustainable sanctuaries for the majority of the world's displaced.

We suggest that how we do that needs to be context-specific. It needs to look at the particular economic and political circumstances of the host countries and the contexts we are dealing with in Africa. That is the overview of the book.

Chair: That is brilliant. Thank you very much indeed. I think that is very clear. We have a number of follow-up questions that explore that in more detail.

Q46 **Mrs Latham:** Have DfID and the wider Government engaged with your theories from the book "Refuge" and, if so, to what extent?

Professor Betts: It is worth noting that a number of things have taken place, particularly in the African context, since we wrote the book, many of which build upon the ideas in the book. Notably, the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, and the World Bank have taken up many of those ideas. They are promoting more market-based approaches to refugees based on a logic of development, and we see pioneering projects in Africa—notably the jobs compact in Ethiopia, and new pioneering settlements, like the Kalobeyei settlement in Kenya, which is an integrated settlement for refugees and host communities that goes beyond the camp logic.

DfID has embraced many of our core ideas. In the Middle East, it supported the Jordan compact, for example, as well as the Lebanon compact, to create the right to work for refugees in Jordan. Many of those ideas are also now being supported in Africa. DfID's support for the Ethiopia jobs compact is, in a way, a follow-up to the Jordan compact for the African context. It represents a way of supporting employment in two industrial zones that DfID is supporting, in addition to DfID's support for Ethiopia's quite pioneering attempts to provide the right to work and economic inclusion for refugees.

DfID has also focused notably on supporting Uganda. Uganda is famed for having one of the most progressive refugee policies in the world. In



contrast to its neighbours, it allows refugees the right to work and freedom of movement. Its policies are by no stretch of the imagination perfect, but it allows those socio-economic freedoms, and DfID has been at the forefront of supporting that.

I also think that it is very noticeable that DfID is a champion for a development-based, market-based approach to self-reliance, and we should give it an immense amount of credit for that work. I, of course, have a number of recommendations for what DfID could do differently, but I will hold that in case there is a follow-up question relating to it.

Q47 Mrs Latham: May I also ask what you would like to see change in the UK Government's approach to refugees both here and abroad?

Professor Betts: As I said, it is worth being clear that DfID is doing many good things compared with comparative countries. The 0.7% of GDP that is ring-fenced does immensely positive things in the humanitarian realm, particularly for refugees. Nevertheless, I have a series of things that I would recommend based on my work, and I will enumerate them one by one, if I may.

Q48 Mrs Latham: Is this just for DfID, or for the whole Government?

Professor Betts: For DfID with reference to the whole of Government.

First, DfID should continue to place emphasis, and place greater emphasis, on the economic inclusion of refugees and displaced populations as a whole. If refugees can be self-reliant and achieve autonomy, it is better for them, their communities, the host societies, and indeed donor assistance. The key to this is promoting jobs and market-based opportunities. DfID needs to continue to promote that in a more consistent way. That must involve backing champion countries with progressive refugee policies. Where countries adopt progressive policies, such as Uganda, Ethiopia, and to some extent Kenya, they should be positively rewarded and backed.

We should also be advocating more systematically for the right to work and socio-economic freedoms like the freedom to move. At the moment, I think too much of DfID's funding is still weighted towards disaster relief and humanitarian funding focused on food assistance and material aid. That continues to be very important, but if we can create self-reliance there may be less need to support vulnerabilities, and building on capacities can create more sustainable options. That is recommendation one.

Recommendation two is less commonly heard. It is that more funding should go directly to refugee-led community-based organisations. Through our research, we have identified in Uganda and Kenya literally hundreds of refugee-led community-based organisations—CBOs—providing social protection within their communities. Yet they struggle to get recognition or funding.

In the case of Kampala, Uganda, for example, there is one recognised implementing partner of the UN Refugee Agency: InterAid—a national organisation that has held a monopoly position as the implementing partner for decades. Refugee-led community-based organisations are locked out of formal funding and recognition, but organisations in Kampala like Bondeko, YARID and HOCW are providing crucial services, including vocational education, and responses to sex and gender-based violence. They are meeting some of DfID’s core aims, but most do not receive any bilateral donor assistance.

Of course, those organisations have challenges meeting audit requirements and being accountable and transparent, but with the right support, refugee-led community-based organisations can be an efficient and effective way to deliver directly to communities. They are too much off the map. With an Economic and Social Research Council grant, we have mapped out those communities in Nairobi, Kakuma, Nakivale and Kampala and we see them as a really viable, efficient route to back communities.

Q49 Chair: Have any other donors done what you are urging DfID to do with regard to CBOs or is this universally—

Professor Betts: This is relatively new. Occasionally ad hoc funding comes from embassies in those countries, discretionary small amounts. We are talking five figures—£10,000, £20,000—here and there. It has not been systematised as a way of doing things. In our survey, when we have asked refugees about their sources of social protection, they have emphasised community. They have emphasised family, friends, informal financing mechanisms. That is something that needs to be squarely placed firmly on the agenda and I invite the Committee to explore that on its visit to East Africa.

Chair: Thank you. Great.

Professor Betts: The third area I would like to emphasise is that there needs to be more transparency and visibility relating to DfID’s work on refugees and displaced populations. On the website and public documents, they get lost within other areas such as disaster relief. Funding streams are often hard to identify. For the general public, it is important to know what the Government is doing around refugees and displacement. Notably in Africa, the continent with more refugees than any other continent in the world, it is not as possible to engage.

In this area, of all areas of DfID’s work, migration and refugees are of such a high public profile that to inform public debate I would urge DfID and the Committee to press DfID to make its work in this area more visible, more coherent and more transparent. It is particularly important given the nature of the debate in the UK and across Europe that people understand that refugees are not just about what happens in the UK or Europe or the Mediterranean but there is a broader picture. We need to make that visible.

Fourthly and related to that, I urge the UK to develop a national refugee and displacement strategy; one that crucially is coherent across different

branches of Government. Too often, I would argue, the Home Office, DfID and to a lesser extent the FCO are pulling in different directions relating to refugees and displacement. There is a lot that DfID in particular and the UK Government do that is very good for refugees, but in some cases it risks being undermined or viewed around the world as hypocritical, frankly, when it is in tension with the Home Office's conduct in relation to refugees and people in need of international protection.

We need a more whole-of-Government approach. We need coherence and we need to ensure that we do not undermine our international reputation in the very good areas that DfID is working by allocating disproportionately large funds to building walls when anchors are likely to be more effective, in the national interest and in support of our values. I urge a joined-up, visible national strategy on refugees and displacement that could unify cross-party consensus and meet a variety of interests and values.

Fifthly, I urge—

Chair: I'm sorry, I think Pauline wants to come back on that.

Mrs Latham: No, not specifically on that, on a point about jobs.

Chair: How long is your list?

Professor Betts: Just three more. Fifthly, DfID needs to continue to emphasise that all programmes should be evidence based or evidence gathering. Impact evaluations, randomised control trials and collaborations with universities and think-tanks should be systematically built into all programmes and interventions. DfID is doing some very good pioneering work in this area, but it is worth reinforcing. Particularly in areas around cash-based assistance, where DfID is pioneering innovative financing approaches, there is a lot to learn and we should ensure that evidence is a key part of that work.

Sixthly, an area where there needs to be great emphasis is the role of the private sector in business, not just the role of multinational corporations, but refugee and displaced people's own entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises. Government can play a role in catalysing entrepreneurship within and on behalf of displaced communities. It is business primarily rather than Government that will create jobs and sustainable opportunities for refugees and displaced persons, but it can be catalysed and supported by a strategy for refugees and the displaced that nurtures that.

When you visit East Africa, I think you will be struck by how much enterprise there is in refugee camps, settlements and urban areas. It is that area that leads to sustainable opportunities and livelihoods. Business and the private sector need to be a key part of that.

Finally, seventhly, international displacement—IDP—programmes are less strongly emphasised in DfID's work than refugees. Ultimately, the underlying challenge we are thinking about is displacement. Refugees are



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a subset of displaced and a smaller subset than internal displacement. Internal displacement has fallen off the radar of the Global Compact. It is not a big part of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and it is underplayed in many of DfID's programmes, so we need to ensure that alongside all of the good work that DfID is doing in many refugee countries of origin in which internal displacement takes place—from South Sudan, to Somalia, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Zimbabwe—the programmes that focus on internal displacement, protection, assistance and indeed empowering people with livelihood opportunities are equally applied to internally displaced populations.

Chair: Thank you. We are going to return to the Global Compact later on in the questioning, but Pauline has a follow-up; and then Lloyd.

Q50 Mrs Latham: I just wanted to come back on jobs. Obviously, some of the refugees—particularly in the case of Syria—are going to be highly educated and desirable people to employ within the country where they are being hosted; but there will be many displaced people who are not well educated and do not have many skills. It has been said to me in Greece, when I visited refugee camps there, "They are going to take the jobs of local people, and that is not fair." That is often a criticism, but how do you square that?

Professor Betts: As I said before, a good refugee policy has to be a good host community policy. Host communities must share the benefits of refugee assistance—in job creation, in public service provision like health and education. If the standards of living go up for the host community they will perceive those benefits. In the studies that we have done among host communities in areas like the Turkana region of Kenya, which is home to the Kakuma refugee camps, we see that the local Katana believe that refugees are an economic benefit. They have more concerns about the security implications of hosting. They have concerns about trust; but they recognise the crucial economic contribution that is being made by the presence of both refugees and the international humanitarian community.

Q51 Mrs Latham: But in places like Lesbos it is very different.

Professor Betts: It varies from context to context, and most of my work, it is worth saying, focuses on the African context. In areas like Lesbos it is extremely difficult. Lesbos is dysfunctional for a variety of reasons. Responsibility sharing across the European Union is needed to alleviate pressure on Greece. You cannot create jobs in large numbers on a tiny Greek island. Context matters. Equally, you can argue that creating large-scale jobs for the numbers of refugees in Lebanon is very difficult.

Context is crucial to bear in mind, but when it comes to countries like Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya, creating jobs at all levels that are appropriate to the skills of the individuals, mapping out the markets that exist, mapping out where the demand for labour exists within those communities, mapping out the skills that refugees bring, however diverse, however much based on many years of education or not, is a crucial part of creating sustainable market-based solutions.



What we observe in camp contexts and urban contexts across Africa is that many people are self-employed. We use the term “entrepreneurship” a bit too loosely. They are not, in most cases, running large businesses, but they are buying, selling, trading, hawking. They are providing what is called incentive work for NGOs and international organisations. We hear repeatedly in our work—and we have quantitative data to back it up—that refugees want to be able to work, to support their dignity. The challenge, though, is how we create those jobs in sustainable numbers. That is where organisations like the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation are crucial. DfID can play a role by catalytic funding that brings in the private sector as a job creator.

- Q52 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** I wanted to see if you had any grasp of the numbers. You said that IDP work had been lost off the agenda with DfID and you mentioned a few times that it perhaps seems that we spend more time on creating walls and not anchors. Do you have a quantifiable level of what that is? What is the spend on IDPs and what is the spend on anchors? I struggle to be able to determine that when I look at Development Tracker.

Professor Betts: It is very difficult to make UK spending allocation on refugees and displacement transparent, and make comparisons. That needs to be improved to make public debate possible. As an expert—and I regard myself as an expert in this area—I find it hard to work my way across various UK Government websites and discern how much is being spent on refugees, how much is being spent on IDPs, versus how much the Home Office is spending on asylum seekers who come to the United Kingdom, or recognised refugees in the UK. We need a much more systematic Government-wide possibility to make these figures transparent and to be able to weigh up what proportion of our overall spending on refugees and displacement is development aid to refugees in low and middle-income countries, what proportion is in countries of origin allocated to the internally displaced, and what proportion goes towards asylum seekers who reach the United Kingdom. It is very difficult to get that information.

- Q53 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** Do you have a rough order of where the balance is?

Professor Betts: My sense is that, in most of the refugee host countries that we champion, such as Uganda or Ethiopia, we are probably allocating, roughly, some programmes of around £50 million, while some go up to about £170 million or £180 million. On IDPs, it is harder to discern because the IDP programmes are much more built around good governance, security and stabilisation and have knock-on effects, so it is much harder to discern what is specifically IDP-focused.

Equally, with Home Office spending, the challenge is to disaggregate asylum, but it is fairly clear to most observers that the allocation is disproportionately focused on the UK’s asylum system. One of the figures Sir Paul Collier and I put forward in *Refuge* is that we spend less than a penny per refugee in low and middle-income countries for every pound



that we spend on an asylum seeker who reaches the UK. That is an extrapolation and is not based on UK data, but on Europe-wide and global spending, but it is roughly likely to be in the order of 100:1 as a crude estimate. It is a problematic comparison because not all of that money is focused on assistance when it comes to the British and European context.

- Q54 **Chair:** I like your anchor-versus-wall analogy. Obviously there is the element you have just referred to about the amount spent here as opposed to there, if you like. Would you be critical of some of the programmes in Africa that seem more geared to building a wall rather than forging an anchor? If so, can you tell us a bit more about that?

Professor Betts: In a way, the British Government's engagement with Africa on migration and displacement bifurcates between support for refugee-hosting areas and support for internally displaced persons on the one hand, primarily through DfID, and bilateral partnerships, led partly by the FCO with Home Office support, which are focused on migration, capacity building, readmission agreements or strengthening the capacity for extraterritorial border control.

It is not necessarily the case that it is wrong to engage in bilateral migration partnerships. It can have important benefits. Done humanely and with respect for human rights, deportation is arguably a necessary part of a credible asylum system that has public trust. Nevertheless, I think there needs to be more coherence across those policies and a recognition that, wherever possible, we should strive to build anchors rather than walls. If through creating better opportunities and effective protection, refugees are less likely to choose to move onwards and get support in integrated settlements and get access to jobs and education, that is a much better and more viable way to ensure that people remain protected in their region than having to embark on perilous journeys at the hands of smugglers. I would emphasise the joined-up governance approach to ensure that wherever possible we emphasise anchors before we need to spend money on walls. It is also more efficient in terms of public spending.

When we come to the wider question of migration, the line between forced displacement and voluntary displacement is a hard one to draw. When we think about more aspirational migration, whether that is refugees who have found protection and choose to move onwards as migrants, or whether it is people who are not refugees who see meaning and hope in moving on, one thing we have to be aware of and have more of an evidence base across DfID is the relationship between migration and development. One of the most robust academic relationships is the so-called migration hump, where, in the short term, increased development opportunity increases the demand for emigration. Putting more money in for development does not necessarily cut emigration.

I would argue that that does not apply equally to all groups of migrants or to all areas of development assistance. We have to disaggregate that. For some groups, like refugees, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that better economic opportunity and better development opportunity makes



them more likely to stay at home. They are not the group that chose to be migrants. They only moved when the crisis hit. Before that, they chose not to be migrants. Across the board, we need a better understanding of what development aid does in relation to onward movement, because it is not a simple picture. It is sometimes mischaracterised by politicians and it is sometimes oversimplified even by academics.

- Q55 **Richard Burden:** In your book, you are pretty critical of UNHCR and what you describe as its inability to fulfil its mandate in a lot of situations. You said in your opening remarks that you thought UNHCR was starting to make progress as well. What do you think they need to do to change the situation? In going back to the UK Government, what do you think Britain could do to help stimulate and catalyse that change?

Professor Betts: It is worth saying that UNHCR is in a very difficult position in the contemporary world. There is endemic non-compliance with the 1951 convention on the status of refugees, UNHCR is facing budget cuts not least as a result of our friends across the Atlantic, and the entry of IOM into the UN system has created a sense of mandate competition around UNHCR. We are entering a very different world. Multipolarity concerns and public fears around migration place UNHCR in a very different world from where it has been working for the past couple of decades, so it is a challenged environment.

You are right to say my colleague Paul Collier and I were critical of UNHCR in the book. I have been quite impressed with some of the progress that has been made. They have taken seriously the ideas of creating enabling environments for refugees, working collaboratively with the World Bank to create development opportunities, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework is showing progress in some countries—notably Kenya and Ethiopia—in creating models that are a new departure. I would praise UNHCR for a lot of that work and that progress. They have engaged closely with some of the ideas that we put forward. Nevertheless, it is important that the organisation be pushed to develop a strategy that makes it able to function in the 21st century.

One thing worth noting is that the key skills to lead refugee protection in the 21st century are not camp management and indefinite humanitarian assistance and they are not necessarily advocacy around international refugee law, although those areas are important. They are around development economics to create opportunities for refugees to be self-sufficient and around political engagement to provide leadership to the international community. Those are areas where I still feel UNHCR can be encouraged to strengthen. Its capacity to bring collective action and to facilitate international co-operation in relation to situation-specific context matters for DfID because it is the basis on which we as a country can leverage reciprocal contributions by other countries. We need international organisations that can provide visionary leadership around particular displacement crises. UNHCR is going in the right direction, but DfID can support that trajectory.

- Q56 **Richard Burden:** Do you think UNHCR's mandate holds it back on that?



Professor Betts: I think one of the challenges is that UNHCR's mandate to protect and provide solutions to refugees is still valid. It continues to be a very valid mandate, but one of the challenging areas is a core part of its mandate, which is to provide oversight to implementation of the 1951 convention. Many of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries are not signatories to the 1951 convention. Many countries across Europe, Australia and North America increasingly are not complying with the 1951 convention, and yet, the organisation is attached to that mandate. It would not be doing its job if it weren't rigorously and robustly defending the convention. Yet, while that is an important area, I would argue that it is not the key aspect of what leads to better outcomes for refugees and displaced populations.

In today's world, it is about politics and economics at least as much as it is about law. The balance of focus in the organisation, I would argue, needs to be updated to reflect that. What was noticeable—I know we will come to this in the Global Compact—was that two areas were off the agenda: reform of UNHCR and reform of the 1951 convention on the status of refugees. While I regard both to be of ongoing relevance and, indeed, a UN refugee agency to be indispensable, leaving both of those off the table was a self-preservation strategy—understandable from UNHCR but one where it missed the opportunity to update its position in the international institutional architecture and ensure that it could be more relevant to purpose.

There are just a couple of areas in which DfID—

- Q57 **Chair:** I will just interrupt on that. Is the worry that, had those things been on the table, it would have gone in a very different direction from the one that you advocate?

Professor Betts: That's absolutely correct. There is a valid logic behind that strategy, but it wasn't articulated early by UNHCR. However, the risk was that, had those areas been on the table, we might have gone further down towards the lowest common denominator arguments and gotten a worse deal. That is why I think that the most sound thing we can do is to leave the 1951 convention where it is.

However, behind the scenes, in addition to supporting the Global Compact and the work of CRRF, there is still an element of unfulfilled business, in terms of the organisational capacity of the agency. The British Government can work to champion international institutional reform, to make organisations as effective as they can be in what I regard to be a very different global context.

How specifically can it do that? One challenge is that there is very little turnover of senior management within UNHCR; many of its most senior staff have been there since the late 1990s. Many are very competent, effective and committed—I have no doubts about that—but injecting new ideas and new ways of doing things is an important aspect of organisational change and innovation.



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Ensuring accountability and scrutinising and working collaboratively with UNHCR to ensure that it is the best organisation that it can be is important. However, I stress that UNHCR is working under constraint, that many of its staff do extraordinary work and that I see the direction of travel as being a lot more positive than I did a couple of years ago.

- Q58 **Richard Burden:** May I take you back to what you were saying about IDPs? You made clear that there are an awful lot more people who are displaced internally than are refugees. You talk in the book about the development of market-based solutions and so on. I absolutely see the potential of that approach, and there are some good examples of it among those communities in other countries. However, when a lot of internal displacement is driven by conflict, and there is that instability of people literally having difficulty safeguarding their lives, let alone anything else, what does that look like for IDPs, and what, in practical terms, are you saying should happen around that agenda?

Professor Betts: Context really matters. There is often a sequencing in displacement. There is an emergency phase, during which it is important to stress the humanitarian dimension, whether for refugees or displaced populations. In conflict, the emphasis has to be on saving lives and providing life-saving support, transferring people to areas in which they are safe from conflict and harm, and ensuring that their basic needs are met.

Equally, however, for many internally displaced populations around the world there is a protracted phase, just as with protracted refugee situations. Many people end up internally displaced for five, 10, 15 or 20 years. For many, their immediate lives are not in danger, but there is a need to put them back on track, so that they can access jobs and education and have sustainable opportunities to contribute to their own societies.

What “durable solutions” means for internally displaced peoples is slightly more ambiguous, because they are already in the countries in which they are citizens. We should stress that the country of origin should meet its obligations, including human rights obligations, towards its own citizens. Nevertheless, humanitarian programmes and development programmes are equally valid at different phases within that displacement cycle.

- Q59 **Henry Smith:** Professor Betts, you recently co-authored a report about the Kalobeyei settlement in northern Kenya. Can you summarise some of the major challenges for that initiative, and perhaps some of its successes as well?

Professor Betts: I am very excited about what I have seen happening in Kenya recently. Kenya is a country that, in contrast with Uganda, has a reputation for not providing freedom of movement to refugees and, partly as a consequence, limiting their rights to work. The Dadaab refugee camps are an example of refugee camps at their very worst.

However, Kenya has recently changed its direction, particularly in Turkana county, where the Kakuma refugee camps are. Kakuma would be Kenya's



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seventh largest city, home to 180,000 people, but it is a city with no attachment to the electricity grid and whose population is not expected to stay. For a variety of reasons, the Turkana County government has taken the very pioneering step of seeing the presence of refugees as an opportunity for regional development, and the Kenyan Government have backed that. Kalobeyei settlement, just a few kilometres from Kakuma, is the most innovative example of that. It is now home to 38,000 people and opened in 2016. It is, if you like, a third way in responding to refugees between camps on the one hand and urban settlement on the other. Instead of taking either of those options—camps or moving to urban areas—it is an integrated settlement for refugees and host communities. It is intended that refugees receive public services on the same basis. They can access the same health facilities and schools. They can access common markets in between where they live, operating shops, and buying and selling.

In addition, new programmes have been pioneered. There is a cash for shelter programme, the first in the world for refugees, providing refugees with money to choose and commission their own shelter structures. There is a form of artificial currency called Bamba Chakula—it means “get your food” in Swahili—which is distributed by the World Food Programme using mobile phones. It enables something close to a cash-based assistance model.

Kalobeyei is pioneering, but it is at an early phase. With funding from the World Food Programme, we are following refugees newly arrived from South Sudan in Kalobeyei, and newly arrived refugees from South Sudan who are relocated to Kakuma, to see what difference these things make to outcomes. Even within two years, incomes are around double for newly arrived South Sudanese refugees in Kalobeyei as compared with those in Kakuma, and food security levels are much higher. That is partly because they are given kitchen gardens where they can grow their own crops, even though it is dryland agriculture.

Kalobeyei is at an early phase. It is not perfect, but it is a pioneering model that has been supported, particularly by the EU trust fund. It needs to be followed closely and learned from, based on evidence, but I am very excited about it.

Q60 Henry Smith: To follow up on that, do you know whether there are any plans to trial this innovative approach elsewhere? What lessons can be learned for development from the projects?

Professor Betts: The UNHCR’s head of communications has explicitly said, “This is our new approach, which is going global.” The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework is very much intending to try to support self-reliance through integrated development that supports refugees and hosts. Kalobeyei is an example of that. Uganda’s national self-reliance strategy is a larger-scale example of that. To have something like that in Kenya, given its reputation vis-à-vis refugees, is a very exciting new departure and a positive example.



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Ethiopia, through the nine pledges that it made in September 2016, is trying to provide refugees with the right to work and freedom of movement. In many of its camps in the south around Dollo Ado and Melkadida there are examples of integrated economic opportunity for refugees and host community members. We see elements of what is in Kalobeyei appearing elsewhere, but at the moment Kalobeyei itself is unique, and there are no clear plans for another Kalobeyei to be created elsewhere.

- Q61 Chair:** May I develop that, thinking more specifically about what DfID could be doing in this regard? You have given the great example of Kalobeyei and the example from Ethiopia of the nine pledges, and you have reminded us of Uganda's positive policy with regard to these sorts of issues. Can you talk a bit about DfID's involvement in those examples? Do you have any suggestions for how DfID could do more, not only to support those examples, which are already very significant, but, building on Henry's last question, to extend that good practice to other parts of those three countries, or other parts of sub-Saharan Africa?

Professor Betts: I would like to see DfID build a coherent strategy around refugees and displacement that places economic inclusion at the centre. At the moment, there are ad hoc examples of DfID engaging with these pioneering, progressive examples, but they are a little bit too ad hoc. I would like to see the engagement that has taken place in Uganda, and the jobs compact in Ethiopia, to be more systemically applied to other contexts. In contrast to Uganda and Ethiopia, DfID's support for pioneering programmes in Kenya is less clear. The Kalobeyei settlement has been supported, notably through EU trust fund support in the aftermath of the Valletta summit. There is scope for DfID to play a more active role in Kakuma and Kalobeyei in Kenya, but also in terms of other examples.

DfID has also had a very strong relationship with Tanzania in a variety of areas, including refugees. Tanzania has recently been a more challenging partner to UNHCR and others. It has declined to engage with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, but my conversations in Dar es Salaam have led me to believe that the Government is open to providing more economic inclusion to refugees, with the right support. In areas like that, in contexts like Rwanda—which wants to be a progressive, pioneering voice in regards to the economic inclusion of refugees—DfID can play a role, not only in supporting areas like Kalobeyei that have additional support from the international community, but in looking for new opportunities where there are strong bilateral relationships, notably Rwanda and Tanzania.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed. That leads nicely into Lloyd's line of questioning.

- Q62 Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** I might lead on the Tanzania part of the question. Tanzania has withdrawn from some of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, partly because it is expected to rely on loans rather than grants. Do you think that tells us that responsibility sharing,



which is one of the fundamentals of the new compact, is really a lot of hot air and that in reality, the responsibility is still on the poorest countries to not only pick up the pieces, but pay for it with interest?

Professor Betts: Responsibility sharing is a crucial pillar of the refugee system. UNHCR's emphasis on responsibility sharing in the Global Compact is absolutely right and appropriate. It is the missing piece of the puzzle. The refugee system, when it was created, had very strong norms around asylum—the obligation that countries have towards refugees that reach their territory—but very weak norms and obligations on states to support refugees that are not on their territory. That means that it is discretionary, so UNHCR's focus on responsibility in the Global Compact is absolutely correct. It is the gap in the refugee system that needs to be addressed to make it more predictable and more effective, but not all states are reciprocally contributing to that. Through DfID's work, there is a notable emphasis on responsibility sharing. DfID, through the 0.7% and the focus on humanitarian work, is at the forefront of supporting that.

That needs to be recognised, but more needs to be done to facilitate genuine responsibility sharing, both in terms of development assistance and creating long-term job opportunities, and—this is worth keeping in the background, particularly for the joined-up government approach—resettlement is still a crucial area that we need to emphasise with displacement in Africa. Some people who are in intractable limbo for a long time, or some very vulnerable refugees in displaced populations, will not be able to have long-term futures in neighbouring countries. They will need to be moved onwards, to Europe, the UK and elsewhere. Resettlement has to be a crucial part of responsibility sharing; it cannot just be about development and humanitarian aid. Equally, as a last resort, spontaneous arrival asylum is important, partly because of its symbolic value. If we are not prepared to provide asylum on our territory, what message do we send to Tanzania and other Governments when we ask them to do the same?

When countries like Tanzania opt out of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, it is for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons they publicly gave was that they felt there was no genuine responsibility sharing; that they were being asked to borrow money from the World Bank to support refugees. I welcome the World Bank's involvement in this area, and the IDA18 window has put significant concessionary finance into this space. However, there is a role for developed countries and organisations like DfID to underwrite some of that risk. If loans are provided by the Bank, can somebody underwrite the interest and the risk in ways that mean that other sources of finance from the Bank and elsewhere arrive in countries like Tanzania effectively interest free, and help create a relationship that can be effective for Tanzania and for the British Government, based on responsibility sharing?

Tanzania, for me, is a tragic example of miscommunication. Yes, the regime is challenging in many ways, but there are people in the Government who want to be able to do more for refugees. It is a country with decades of commitment to hosting large numbers of refugees, but

decades of being let down systematically by the international community. There is a lot more that we can do to engage countries like that as genuine partners, rather than dictating terms from the outside.

- Q63 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** You may be being very kind to DfID in your responses. DfID is a senior shareholder in the World Bank; Penny Mordaunt herself sits on the executive board. You are saying on the one hand that DfID is doing a lot, and on the other that the World Bank has made the wrong call and should not have offered these loans, but who is doing that? The World Bank is not separate from DfID; DfID is an integral part of it—one of the top 20 or top five around the table. Has DfID not expressed sufficient concerns within the World Bank, or is it that we are shouting but other countries are just blocking any movement?

Professor Betts: Let me be clear: I think the World Bank's role in this area is very welcome and important. Its IDA18 window, which is opening up \$2 billion of funding to poor refugee-hosting countries, is extremely welcome. What needs to be done is building around that to ensure that countries such as Tanzania are engaged in constructive dialogue and partnership, and that DfID and other bilateral donors can explore innovative ways of underwriting interest and risk for those host countries where loan finance is being provided by the bank.

I am not criticising the bank strongly; I am arguing that more can be done to join the dots and create a more coherent and effective structure of responsibility sharing. I am very aware that the UK Government sits as a shareholder on the bank's board, and I think that for the most part that is being leveraged effectively, but there are areas where, with creativity, DFID finance could be matched with World Bank concessionary loans to create a much more palatable deal for those borrowing countries.

- Q64 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** In reality, do you think that responsibility sharing can ever work when the populations in rich countries have not fully bought into the idea that they have an equal responsibility to pay out? It is similar to the ongoing argument about differentiated responsibilities in climate change and who needs to contribute to what level. Could we ever get to truly equal responsibility sharing, or will the burdens end up being placed on a couple of poorer countries?

Professor Betts: DfID and the British Government have to take the public with them. We need a democratic mandate for the work we do abroad. That is why visibility and transparency for DfID's work with refugees and displaced populations is so important.

- Q65 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** And are they doing enough to encourage that kind of understanding, not only internationally but domestically?

Professor Betts: I think there is more that can be done. As I said, the work that DfID does vis-à-vis refugees and displaced populations is not as visible or transparent as it could be. That is reflected in the UK media and in public debate, where people understand refugees as asylum seekers who reach the UK. That is such a drop in the ocean—such a tiny proportion of the real refugee and displacement challenge. The public needs to



understand that 85% of the world's refugees are in low and middle-income countries, that there are more refugees in Africa than in any other continent in the world, and that most refugees do not want to and will not come to Europe.

Those are crucial messages, but visually, the images that the public understand and see are of the Mediterranean, or of towns that formerly had low-skilled, labour-intensive manufacturing, and are now struggling with supposedly unmanageable migration. That is a mischaracterisation of the realities of refugees and displacement around the world.

I agree that DfID can do more to make its work transparent, to join up with other parts of Government and to ensure that the reality is more adequately reflected in the media. It does not help that headlines about Uganda in various tabloid newspapers criticise DfID support for Ugandan refugee programmes in relation to corruption. They are quick to highlight examples of corruption and to question public spending; they are much slower to run headlines that show the very progressive work of those countries, and the fact that Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda between them host more refugees than the whole European Union. That, to me, is striking. There are 1.4 million refugees in Uganda. That is more refugees than reached the European Union at the height of the European refugee crisis. That is a figure that the public need to understand in relation to responsibility sharing.

In some cases, we need to recognise that we need sustainable responses in those regions of the world, because not having them would not only undermine our values but might even undermine the proclaimed interests of some parts of society in having more manageable and predictable migration movements.

- Q66 **Chris Law:** I want to ask a question on future development around refugees. Is one of the biggest causes for migration, going forward, going to be climate change? Last year at COP 23, we had a discussion about how by 2050 there could be anything between 100 million and 1 billion—the figures are wild—on the move on planet Earth. Is that something that needs to be communicated much more through Government and into the public domain?

Professor Betts: We have mentioned the Global Compact—a document that does what it does effectively. It provides non-binding principles around responsibility sharing, highlights who the main donors and contributors should be and the ways in which they can contribute, and sets out a couple of mechanisms through which to do that: global conferences, a global platform, potentially with solidarity conferences, and a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. What, among other things, is not in that compact, and what there is very little of in public discussion, is the future trajectory of global displacement. New drivers of displacement have been left aside from contemporary institutional debates. Among those new drivers, we will see more and more people fleeing, within their own countries and across borders, for reasons that are related to environmental degradation and climate change. Many of the



estimates are just estimates; no one really has a clear figure. The estimates, as you highlight in your question, vary radically.

It is very hard in most cases to attribute movement directly to climate change, except for in a rapid onset natural disaster, or in the case of disappearing islands. Often, those movements are intertwined with fragile states, food insecurity and water insecurity, but at some point, the world will need to update where it draws the line between people we regard to be voluntary migrants, and people we regard to be in need of international protection and are crossing borders because of human rights concerns. At some point, the world will need to decide who, among those displaced by climate change, has particular rights and entitlements. It will need to interpret international human rights law. It will need to interpret international humanitarian law for those populations and fulfil those obligations and, worryingly, at the moment that has been off the international agenda. It is pressing. It is urgent. We will have more and more displacement. It will be one of the defining issues of the 21st century, and at the moment too many heads are in the sand, in denial about future trajectories of movement.

Other big mega-trends will drive displacement and migratory movements: the youth bulge in Africa; Africa's demographic pyramid compared with its ability to create jobs; and fragile states. That last agenda is one that we haven't managed to address as an international community, yet 68% of the world's refugees come from just five fragile states. If we could address fragile states, including the nexus to environmental stresses, we would be well on our way to reducing displacement numbers, but we are failing to do that.

Q67 Chris Law: You talked about the Global Compact being non-binding. It is, of course, being adopted in Marrakech in December. Apart from the fanfare, do you think it will actually make any difference to global refugee policies?

Professor Betts: The question around the Global Compact is: what is the theory of change, and how will it change practice on the ground? That is the piece that I think is slightly lacking. The document itself, as I have said, lays out a series of actors who need to be engaged in responsibility sharing—states, faith-based groups, NGOs, the private sector. It lays out a whole variety of ways in which contributions can be made. The mechanisms it outlines for that change are: an annual conference to be convened by the High Commissioner for Refugees, probably in Geneva; solidarity platforms for particular crises, which could include solidarity conferences, perhaps like the unsuccessful one we saw in Uganda two years ago; and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

Those may well yield change and lead to significant increases in responsibility sharing, but they may not; it will depend on political will. It will depend on commitment by donors and host countries. It will depend on commitments by other actors, such as the business sector. What is open to question is whether a non-binding document, by itself, can leverage that change. I would argue that by itself it cannot. What is

needed is to ask: what are the complementary structures that are necessary to make it effective? To me, the key one is UNHCR having the organisational capacity to facilitate that collective action.

We know from history that when UNHCR has convened solidarity conferences, they can be effective. In 1989, it convened the comprehensive plan of action for Indo-Chinese refugees, which led to the resettlement around the world of literally millions of Vietnamese and other Indo-Chinese refugees from South-East Asian nations. It convened the international conference on refugees in Central America in 1989, which over seven years provided support for integration and self-reliance to many refugees displaced by the cold war in Central America.

What was crucial there was political leadership. Political leaders in UNHCR, such as the late Sérgio Vieira de Mello, former High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other individuals provided that visionary, strategic and political leadership. UNHCR today needs to have that if the Global Compact is to translate into practice. It is an open question as to whether that capacity is there in a changed political world. We need to be asking the question and, indeed, to be encouraging and supporting UNHCR across human resource capacity to be a political leader, to provide a vision, and to bring actors together on the basis of principled but interest-driven agreements, so that host countries benefit, donor countries benefit and, ultimately, refugees and displaced populations get access to better protection and solutions.

The jury is out for me. There is no reason why it cannot work, but it is a challenging world in which to make a non-binding agreement effective. It will require major political leadership, and UNHCR needs all the help that it can get.

Chair: What a great note to end the sitting on. Thank you so much for your evidence today. It has been immensely helpful.