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New study presents key findings to address displacement risk and impacts in the Greater Horn of Africa

Tuesday 26 September 2017 (Geneva/Mombasa)

The [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#) (IDMC) launched today a report focussing on “Reducing Displacement Risk in the Greater Horn of Africa”. The publication presents the first baseline for displacement risk associated with sudden-onset disasters in the countries of the Greater Horn of Africa with the ultimate aim of reducing future displacement risk. As sudden-onset natural hazards, primarily floods, caused more than **600,000** new displacements in 2016 in the Greater Horn of Africa, this report is very timely.

“The need to address the risk and impacts of disaster displacement, which will be made worse by climate change, is a global and regional policy priority. To do so, however, such risk must be measured, and governments and other agencies need a baseline against which to measure their progress,” said Justin Ginetti, head of Data and Analysis at IDMC. “To address this need, we have developed a methodology to estimate displacement risk associated with sudden-onset natural hazards, and the result is the first fully probabilistic assessment of the phenomenon for the Greater Horn of Africa”.

Displacement in the Greater Horn of Africa is highly complex because a range of interlinked triggers and drivers are at play. Disasters increase competition for land and resources, which can lead to violence and conflict. In turn, this can also increase communities’ vulnerability to the impacts of natural hazards. Furthermore, the region is among those worst affected by the multiple effects of climate change including above average temperature, excessive or insufficient rainfall, desertification and environmental degradation.

At present, only three countries in the region - Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda - systematically collect data on disasters and maintain a national loss inventory. Such information is needed to ensure that those in greatest need of assistance are prioritised, self-reliance is encouraged, obstacles to solutions are addressed and settlement options are risk-informed and sustainable, leaving people less vulnerable to future hazards rather than putting them back in harm’s way.

Significantly, the report highlights the need for more investment to track how many people are displaced over time after the event in order to strengthen the resilience of displaced communities and their hosts.

There are also important conceptual and data gaps on displacement associated with drought, and given that more people are likely to be displaced by drought in the region than by other hazards addressed by the report, such a gap hinders the effort to prevent displacement. “If updated and extended to other areas of the region, IDMC’s current model for analyzing displacement of pastoralists could be used to improve resilience not only for nomadic groups but also other affected communities,” said Leonardo Milano, Senior Data Scientist at IDMC.

“The report’s findings also suggest low levels of preparedness to cope with hazards in the region. Government and communities need to be better prepared to confront the risks they face, including the establishment of effective early-warnings systems. This would cause more short-term displacement, but save many more lives.”

Key Facts

Greater Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, plus Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania.

Displacement figures:

- Sudden-onset natural hazards, primarily floods, triggered more than **600,000** new displacements in 2016 in the Greater Horn of Africa.
- Slow-onset events such as drought and environmental degradation added considerably to the figures, but quantifying their impacts is difficult.
- At the same time, conflict and violence triggered at least **800,000** new displacements in 2016.

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Note to editors

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (<http://www.internal-displacement.org>) was established in 1998. Monitoring internal displacement caused by conflict, violence, human rights violations and natural disasters worldwide, IDMC is widely respected as the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement throughout the world.

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