



"Internal displacement remains one of the world's most significant human rights and humanitarian challenges, as millions of people continue to be internally displaced every year by conflict, violence, human rights violations, disasters and development projects," warned today the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani.

"Over 26 million people were internally displaced at the end of 2011 due to armed conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations, while nearly 15 million persons were newly displaced during that same year due to sudden onset natural hazards," Mr. Beyani recalled as he presented his report on 'Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons' to the UN General Assembly.

"These last twenty years have witnessed important advances in the normative framework as well as the response to internal displacement by the international community," the expert noted, recalling that 2012 marks the 20th Anniversary of the creation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, by the then UN Commission on Human Rights.

"However, enormous challenges remain," he stressed, underscoring that "mega trends like rapid urbanization, human mobility, population growth and food and water insecurity, together with other factors such as more prevalent natural disasters notably due to the impact of climate change are expected to further increase internal displacement in the future."

The independent expert said that responses to internal displacement situations will require that States and international and civil society actors be ready to adopt comprehensive frameworks which address all types and stages of internal displacement, address new issues or areas in

which responses need to be strengthened, and pay particular attention to prevention and durable solutions strategies.

In his report, Mr. Beyani calls on Governments to adopt, among other things, measures which have been shown to have positive effects, like successful conflict resolution mechanisms implemented, for example, in cases of land disputes; and documentation practices such as in relation to civil status documents (e.g. birth registrations) and property title registries.

The human rights expert also recommends the implementation of preparedness and early-warning systems, as well as capacity-building measures which enhance the capacity of all levels of Government, in particular local authorities, and of civil society to address internal displacement.

In addition, the UN Special Rapporteur drew special attention to the need to adopt "mechanisms for the meaningful participation of internally displaced persons in decisions which have an impact on their lives."