1 On ‘Solutions’

- **Humanitarian assistance must be prioritised based on needs:** Returns (both from neighbouring countries and within South Sudan) are not currently the most pressing or life-threatening humanitarian needs in South Sudan. While contingency planning for large-scale spontaneous return should be undertaken, currently populations are falling into IPC phase 5 with ‘catastrophic’ levels of food insecurity, significant acute malnutrition, ongoing disease outbreaks, significant internal displacements and conflict.

- **The current environment is not suitable for large-scale assisted returns:** The environment in South Sudan is currently not suitable for large-scale facilitated or assisted returns or relocations. It is the hope that IDPs and refugees can find solutions to their displacement that address root causes of violence and vulnerability.

- **Solutions must be driven by IDPs:** All actors should recognize that any support for solutions are based on individual request of IDPs. The three accepted solutions for displacement - return, resettlement, and local integration - are not hierarchical, and interventions should not prioritize one over the others, but rather support the choices of IDPs themselves. Pockets of opportunity to support IDP-decision making, for example through organised go-and-see visits or information sharing, should be considered, where appropriate.

- **Assisted movement must be safe, dignified, informed, voluntary:** All returns and relocations must be safe, dignified, voluntary and informed. This applies to all displaced population movements, regardless of who assists them.

- **Those assisting returns are accountable:** Humanitarians, UNMISS and the Government must be accountable to affected populations for facilitating or assisting movements, returns or relocations, keeping in mind the different roles that each actor plays and that the primary duty bearer is the Government. As a minimum, feasibility and protection assessments should be shared with the HCT and ICWG, and cross-checked against minimum standards, before a formal decision to assist is made.

- **Robust feasibility assessments are essential:** As well as upholding the IASC Durable Solutions principles, all humanitarian support for returns, resettlements and integration should seek to Do No Harm. To support this, feasibility and protection assessments must be completed and transparently shared and should include strong context, conflict sensitivity, do no harm, and gender analysis, HLP assessments and considerations of how the movement and increase in aid may interact with local context and conflict dynamics. UNMISS, humanitarians and donors need to proactively consider the potential for their support for returns and resettlement to facilitate ethnic redistribution and the political, conflict and humanitarian consequences that this may have in the short and long term. **Displaced populations must not be forgotten:** the needs of those who are unable to return or relocate, and who may be affected by competing demands on limited resources in return or host communities, must be considered in the analysis of options and humanitarian response.

- **Post-return monitoring:** To ensure minimal safety and informed choice of IDPs during counselling, the Solutions Working Groups (SWG) must ensure that there is long term monitoring capacity at the place of return and that the territory of return is not contested in the present conflict dynamics. **Evaluations of return assistance should be shared with the ICWG and HCT.**
• **HLP issues**: Damage, destruction or unlawful occupation or seizure of housing, land and property (HLP) is a pressing concern for all conflict affected populations, in particular returning IDPs. Loss of HLP documentation, coupled with damage or destruction of Land Registry Offices, and the absence of established mechanisms for property restitution and compensation will impede sustainable returns.

• **Engagement with development actors**: The characterisation of the humanitarian-development nexus should be developed to ensure appropriate complementarity and integrated approaches from the onset of the peace transition. Roles of humanitarian and development actors should be defined and ways of working clarified.

2 **On the Humanitarian Response**

• **Access must be improved and maintained**: Engaging with government, armed groups, and others to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access must be a priority. Situations such as the recent crisis in Yei highlight concern and consequences of limited humanitarian access. This has been illustrated in Yei by child protection actors’ reduced capacities to respond to child protection needs, such as family separation, services for child survivals, child head of households, children with disabilities and release of children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG).

• **The impacts of the crisis on men, women, boys and girls must be addressed**: The protracted nature and legacy of conflict has impacted women, men, boys and girls differently and GBV remains a widespread and serious issue. Humanitarian actors must prioritise the active engagement and support of women and girls. The availability of resources and capacity to enable GBV personnel to guide implementation of inter-agency multi-sectoral GBV programme response remains critical to ensuring provision of accessible, confidential, survivor-centred services to address GBV and to ensuring it is appropriately addressed across all sectors.

• **All manifestations of GBV must be addressed**: While there remains much attention on rape, the most prevalent, debilitating and costly form of GBV is domestic/intimate partner violence – yet it is the most ignored form of GBV. All actors must be cognisant of all types of GBV in South Sudan.

• **There must be better identification and response to grave violations of children’s rights**: Forced child recruitment, child separation, SGBV and other grave violations continue to affect significant numbers of children across South Sudan. The humanitarian community must advocate for an end to such rights violations and violence and allocate adequate resources to respond and prevent SGBV and child rights violations, in adherence with best practices.

• **All humanitarian needs must be considered**: The ability of the peace agreement to bring real security remains a work in progress, especially as several key areas of disagreement remain unresolved. Recent and continuing violence has generated new displacement, in particular in the Central Equatoria region. The potential for further conflict persists, in particular in light of growing and widespread inter-communal violence including cattle raiding, etc, and food insecurity, and with close to five million people in need of life saving food assistance. The risk of famine in parts of South Sudan continues to be a concern: the IPC January 2019 analysis found that as of February-April, and in the presence of humanitarian food assistance, 45,000 people were facing ‘Catastrophe’ (IPC Phase 5) of acute food insecurity, with an overall 57% of the population facing ‘Crisis’ (IPC Phase 3) of acute food insecurity or worse.

• **Humanitarian response must be properly resourced**: Disparity exists between current humanitarian needs and resources. While most sectors suffer from a funding gap, needs in sectors such as GBV and HLP are severely underfunded. Increased resource mobilization is needed to close gaps in the response.
• **Coordination on protection issues in the humanitarian response must be strengthened by all actors:** Quick action and advocacy for early warning and response is essential to saving lives. A commitment to protection mainstreaming should be prioritised by all actors. Development of guidance on responding to civilian protection concerns should be developed to guide both protection and non-protection actors.

3 **FOR THE HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM**

• **The humanitarian response should be needs based:** The HCT should consider all humanitarian needs within South Sudan and not overemphasise returns or other issues when populations are falling further into life threatening levels of vulnerability, food insecurity and displacement and facing grave protection risks.

• **The humanitarian response must be evidence-driven:** The HCT should prioritise the humanitarian response based on the most up-to-date evidence of urgent and life-threatening needs, irrespective of political considerations. The HCT should ensure that humanitarian principles drive the response and not political considerations.

• **HCT/ICWG should engage in joint advocacy for enhanced impact:** The HCT and ICWG should work collaboratively to develop a joint advocacy approach and messages that ensure there is agreement, alignment and collaboration between the two groups on protection in South Sudan.

• **An integrated humanitarian response must be prioritised:** The HCT should lead the humanitarian response in South Sudan in a manner that promotes integration and joint approaches between sectors, particularly given the increasing funding pressures faced by the overall response. Concrete guidance and actions should be developed to move towards integrated programming strategies.

• **The centrality of protection should be promoted:** The HCT should ensure that all humanitarian actors, and the response, mainstream protection and proactively consider the serious protection risks that men, women, boys, girls, and those with specific needs face in South Sudan. Special attention should be given to children who are still and increasingly at risk of forced recruitment, separation and other grave rights violations despite the peace process.

• **Use of military assets must be in line with agreed principles:** The HCT should reinforce principles in line with MCDA guidelines that military assets, including force protection and UNMISS assets, should only be used by humanitarians as a last resort, where there is no civilian/humanitarian alternative.

4 **FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH SUDAN**

• **The Government should champion the importance of protection across South Sudan:** The government should advocate for the respect of protection principles by all stakeholders, including confidentiality, especially when it comes to highly sensitive areas such as SGBV.

• **The Government must uphold the rights of children across South Sudan:** The government should protect rights of children, ensuring that the peace agreement will be respected and that protection mechanisms for children are strengthened in emergency-affected areas, with engagement for system-building taken.

• **The Government must create a conducive environment to support populations wanting to return, relocate or integrate:** It is the primary duty and responsibility of the Government to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity in an informed manner, to their homes and places of habitual residence or to reside voluntarily in another part of the country.
• The Government must be accountable to its citizens and donors, including in its responsibilities towards the peace agreement: The Government has the responsibility to take all steps towards realising the peace agreement. This includes transparency and inclusion in all political, administrative, judiciary, financial, and reconciliation processes. The Government should fight corruption at all levels and ensure responsible, accountable, and transparent use of donor funds for the realization of political, humanitarian, and development objectives. The Government of South Sudan is the primary duty bearer for ensuring the rights of its citizens are upheld and must fulfil this obligation to defend, respect, and ensure civil and human rights. Measures should be taken and mechanisms put in place by the Government to end impunity, especially for perpetrators of GBV and grave violations against children.

5 Key actions to operationalise the advocacy messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory group on solutions to develop or endorse a coherent framework for solutions feasibility and protection assessments, assistance to returning/relocating/integrating populations and post-return monitoring, as well as principles of engagement. Documents endorsed by HCT/UNMISS in 2018 to be reviewed, as a starting point, and updated to reflect 2019.</td>
<td>National Advisory group on solutions</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCT to review ‘interim operational guidance on solutions’ and the Returns and Relocations Principles of Engagement in line with a focus on accountability and transparency.</td>
<td>HCT</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCT and ICWG to agree a joint advocacy strategy on the protection and humanitarian environment in South Sudan to be endorsed by both groups.</td>
<td>HCT/ICWG</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<td>HCT to reinforce guidance on the use of military assets by humanitarian UN agencies or NGOs.</td>
<td>HCT</td>
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<td>HCT and ICWG to map government actors that need to be engaged with through appropriate forums.</td>
<td>HCT/ICWG</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCT and ICWG to map development actors that should be engaged and develop appropriate linkages and strategies.</td>
<td>HCT/ICWG</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICWG, in consultation with the HCT, to develop concrete guidance on integrated programming strategies.</td>
<td>ICWG/HCT</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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<td>Development of guidance/SOP on triggers to responding to civilian protection concerns reports (akin to SOP for relocation of humanitarian staff)</td>
<td>Protection Cluster</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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