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DEVELOPING VOLUNTARY GENDER RESPONSIVE RELOCATION POLICY GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Slum dwellers face a range of challenges— from tenure insecurity to poor quality housing and lack of access to basic amenities and services— threatening their daily existence. Yet, a growing and often understated risk comes from climatic/environmental hazards and natural disasters that threaten both loss of property and life. In high-risk non-viable settlements, physical infrastructure interventions are often hard to justify on the basis of both economic costs measured through cost-benefit analysis or long-term environmental risks, such as rising sea levels or river flooding. Under such circumstances, meeting the commitment of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11), to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” requires the implementation of voluntary relocation schemes where slum upgrading may not create sustainable outcomes. The approach of United Nations (UN) agencies such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and UN-Habitat through the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGRGT) reflects the need for relocation strategies to go beyond a narrow focus on simply tenure status and property rights. As the experience of Habitat for Humanity International (HfHI), in the case of the cross-cutting Cities Alliance-led Liberia Country Program (LCP) highlights, there is also a need to consider dimensions including gender, urban livelihoods, employment, social networks and community linkages in facilitating relocation. To this end the creation of Voluntary Gender Responsive Relocation Policy Guidelines (VGRRG) focuses on creating a gender-responsive, people-centered, participatory, and human rights-based approach to developing affordable housing solutions for low-income households.

Key Words: urban expansion, slums, climate change, housing, relocations



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1. Introduction

Rapid urbanization and population growth have contributed towards the unplanned growth of cities and the creation of informal settlements that substitute for proper affordable housing for low-income groups. These slum settlements tend to be located in precarious areas that threaten the safety of those who live there, making them more susceptible to loss of property and life as climatic change, natural disasters, and environmental risks and hazards, such as sea erosion, river erosion, flooding and river flooding occur. Facilitating access to adequate and affordable housing and upgrading slum settlements has been recognized as fundamental to achieving the inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, as envisioned as part of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, when climatic and environmental risks and hazards threaten the safety and viability of slum communities, slum upgrading is not always a sustainable solution. Creating protections via physical infrastructure interventions can often be deemed unviable either because of associated economic costs, determined through cost-benefit analysis, or anticipated climatic risks, such as rising sea levels or river flooding. In such contexts, voluntary relocation may present the best strategy for dealing with affected communities in a way that is both inclusive and well-integrated and prevents not only harm from environmental challenges but also loss of livelihoods.

This context frames the need for clear guidance on processes of voluntary relocation that take into consideration a range of dimensions. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGRGT) present the basis for this discussion, in framing the international best practice pioneered by United Nations (UN) agencies such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and UN-Habitat. Yet, beyond tenure status and property rights, inclusive relocation processes need to consider the broader urban environment and dimensions such as household livelihoods, employment, gender, social networks and community needs in developing solutions. Promoting community participation, engagement and choice in the identification and selection of land,



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compensation and the implementation process is vital to fostering relocations that can facilitate the goals of the SDGs and the NUA in promoting sustainable development outcomes.

The purpose of this paper is to advocate for the importance of developing Voluntary Gender Responsive Relocation Policy Guidelines (VGRRPG) to protect vulnerable low-income households and communities from life threatening environmental risks and hazards, in a consultative and collaborative manner, as part of enhancing the policy environment to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban development.

2. Creating gender-responsive frameworks for voluntary relocation

Gender-responsive approaches are vital to creating sustainable policy outcomes as they both ensure that women's perspectives are heard, and that the impact of actions, policies and legislation on women are understood. In the context of the emerging literature on climate change policy, as Margret Alston¹ writes, there is growing evidence to suggest that vulnerable groups including women are more affected than others by policies and practices designed to facilitate environmental hazard mitigation and adaptation. The need for 'gender mainstreaming' whereby gender equality is institutionalized has also been growing – as scholars in the field of development studies are increasingly finding linkages between gender issues, disaster and development challenges². This is because, as Moser et al.³ argues, women play a disproportionately important role in informal settlement societies because they are responsible for managing natural resources such as food, water and cooking fuel and raising children. Ultimately, this means that women are often more active community members since they are most vulnerable to localized environmental hazards and disasters as a direct result of gendered roles both within the household and the community as a

¹ Alston, Margaret. "Gender mainstreaming and climate change." *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 47. Pergamon, 2014.

² Bradshaw, Sarah. *Gender, development and disasters*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013.

³ Moser, C, Gauhurts, M and Gonhan, H (1994) *Urban Poverty Research Sourcebook: Sub-city Level Research*, World Bank, Washington DC



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whole⁴. Targeting women's needs within the development process i.e. in relation to voluntary relocation can help lead to better, more satisfactory policy outcomes.

It is also important to remember that just as patterns of urbanization affect disasters, so do disasters affect patterns of urbanization⁵. As opposed to linear perspectives that lie nature disaster risks are separate from urban landscapes and socio-economic characteristics, what the gender-responsive dimension reminds is how interconnected histories and current realities are for certain vulnerable groups like women. Intersectionality of experience can mean that it is likely women in informal settlements may also face other challenges – whether related to livelihoods and employment, social structures and hierarchies, household and age-based discrimination, challenges related to ethnicity, alongside physical/psychological health issues. While each of these issues constitutes vulnerability in and of itself, in the context of disaster-prone, and post-conflict societies the burden on women may unequal to that of men⁶.

In responding to disaster situations, in many developing countries shifts that are meant to foster greater economic change and structural adjustment can worsen gender disparities and vulnerability. Neumayer and Plümper's⁷ research suggests that in emergence and disaster situations gender gaps can be worsened by socio-economic status, impacting on development outcomes. Therefore, the emerging consensus, as reflected in the UNDP-BCPR⁸ programme report, is that the “overlap of disaster and conflict worsens gender-related vulnerabilities and violence.” (p.7-8). This clearly the case in examples such as Liberia⁹ in the aftermath of its civil

⁴ Enarson, E and Morrow, B H (1998) *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*, International Hurricane Center, Florida International University, Florida

⁵ Mitchell, J K (1999) *Crucibles of Hazard: Mega-Cities and Disasters in Transition*, UNU Press, Tokyo

⁶ Plümper, T. and Neumayer, E. (2006) 'The unequal burden of war: The Effects of armed conflict on the gender gap in life expectance', *International Organization*, 60 (3): 723-54.

⁷ Neumayer, E., & Plümper, T. (2007). The gendered nature of natural disasters: The impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(3), 551-566.

⁸ UNDP-BCPR (2011) *Disaster-Conflict Interface: Comparative Experiences 2011*, New York: United Nations Development Programme Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery: p.7-8

⁹ Liebling-Kalifani, Helen, et al. "Women war survivors of the 1989-2003 conflict in Liberia: the impact of sexual and gender-based violence." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 12.1 (2011): 1-21.



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wars (1989-2003). In 2009, UNISDR's attempt to present guidelines to make disaster risk reduction gender sensitive marked a turning point in relation to current discourse¹⁰ on the subject.

Habitat for Humanity International (HfHI), University of East London and Huairou Commission were part of an exercise of developing gender strategy for the land sector, which outlines the relevant normative framework as well as practical considerations¹¹. (fn). The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and International Land Coalition (ILC) recognise conflict and disaster as key priority contexts for gender responsive interventions on land and urban development¹².

3. Developing the Voluntary Gender Responsive Relocation Policy Guidelines in Liberia

The challenges and dilemmas outlined theoretically as part of the introduction have been very real in the case of Liberia's capital, Monrovia. Seventy percent Monrovia's population reside in informal settlements, many of which are highly vulnerable to climate change, disasters and risks and hazards. Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world (ranked 175th out of 187 countries in 2014), with approximately eight-five percent of the population living below the international poverty line. It is also one of the most urbanized countries in the region; almost thirty percent of Liberia's entire population resides in Montserrado County, of which approximately seventy percent reside in Monrovia. Liberia also has 560km of coastline, and is ranked 8th in the world for the percentage of the population living in low elevation coastal zones, with high vulnerability to climate change and low-income levels and low coping capacity. Liberia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather events.¹³ The majority of Liberians lack access to decent and affordable housing, and live in substandard housing conditions in slums. Developing

¹⁰ UNISDR (2009) Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines, Geneva: UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN. http://www.preventionweb.net/files/9922_MakingDisasterRiskReductionGenderSe.pdf

¹¹ Sait, S.M., Ramarosan, M., Ochong, R., and Permezel, M., (2018). Refitting gendered land governance strategies with new global and regional development frameworks: opportunities and challenges for land and gender advocates, *World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty*, DC: World Bank

¹² GLTN, Phase III Strategy 2018 Nairobi

¹³ Approved Project Preparation Funding Application, GCF Documentation June 2018.

https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/1249347/PPF_Application_-_Preparatory_Assessments_for_the_Monrovia_Metropolitan_Climate_Resilience_Project_MMCRP_.pdf



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an effective response to these challenges requires an understanding of the impacts of planned relocation and associated risks for the intended beneficiaries, including the disruption of livelihoods and loss of income, social economic networks and cultural heritage¹⁴.

After decades of both natural and man-made disasters, the country is still recovering from the lingering effects of its civil wars, which ended in 2003, and is still trying to rebuilt the infrastructure and economy that were destroyed. Changing demographics, unplanned urbanization, and climate change have augmented existing vulnerabilities, and point to a future in which disasters will increasingly threaten the national economy, its population, and Liberia's sustainable development.¹⁵ In 2016, The Liberia Country Program (LCP) was formed as a five-year comprehensive urban upgrading program (established with seed funding from Comic Relief), led by Cities Alliance (CA) in collaboration with the Government of Liberia, including the National Housing Authority (NHA). Other partners include UN-Habitat, Slum Dwellers International (SDI), Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WEIGO), HfHI and several other development partners. The LCP builds on the foundation of community engagement, partnerships and institutional capacity building, and supports the alignment and interaction of partner efforts at the national, city and community levels.

To safeguard against the loss of property and life as a result of natural disasters, HfHI is leading the development of the Voluntary Gender Responsive Relocation Policy Guidelines (VGRRPG) in Liberia as part of the LCP. Developed in collaboration with the NHA, and other key community and public-sector organizations, the guidelines recognize that planned voluntary relocations has become a necessary government intervention mechanism through which households and communities affected by environmental challenges can be adequately protected. To this end, the VGRRPG is focused on creating a people-centered, participatory, and human rights-based approach to these development challenges. The methodology for developing these policy

¹⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), (2017): A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change,

¹⁵ Hazards and Vulnerability Report, Habitat for Humanity International, 2016



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guidelines included a desktop literature review (existing legislation, relevant research, international policy frameworks and best practice), analysis of the slum settlement profiles, analysis of a hazards and vulnerability assessment, community consultations, and stakeholder consultations.

The community participatory process followed help develop the policy guidelines as well as a public sector institutional framework established are both critical components to support the successful implementation of such policy guidelines. All these processes and the information gathered were key inputs into the development of the VRGGPG. The process ensured that there is consistent discussion, engagement and validation of the data and information gathered, as well as the proposed recommendations through policy roundtable and city forum discussions. Any proposed solutions ultimately need to be cost-sensitive and efficiently delivered to ensure that they all are affordable to the ultimate consumers, the low-income households. Section 3, below, presents a step-by-step approach to understanding how the policy was developed by HfHI and its partners as part of the LCP. It gives a sense of the growing awareness that multi-scalar, multi-stakeholder processes are vital to creating inclusive and responsive policy outcomes, and that without engagement top-down policy agenda in controversial areas such as community relocation may have a propensity to fail.

4. Evidence-based and participatory processes: A step-by-step methodological approach

There were five main steps in producing the VRGGPG in the case of Liberia. These were: (1) conducting a background review; (2) engaging with the NHA; (3) conducting community consultations; (4) further stakeholder consultations; and (5) dealing with challenges arising from the policy process in relation to effective implementation. These five steps allowed for a comprehensive and methodical approach to policy-making which created an evidence based and participatory approach. It was vital to building a responsive mechanism by which voluntary relocation can take place, building not only on the policy itself but also dealing with challenges of institutional capacity and governance issues. These issues often hinder the effectiveness of good



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and well-thought through policy agendas since without effective consultation and engagement with local actors and beneficiaries i.e. governance stakeholders and community groups among others, there may not be effective buy-in. This section produces a summary of some key aspects of the process.

4.1. Background Policy Review

The background review conducted for the development of the VGRRPG, included looking at various assessments conducted as part of the LCP, land and housing policies and legislation in Liberia, international best practice and relevant international policy frameworks etc. The objectives included understanding existing research, data, debates, frameworks and best practices related to relocation of households' due to risks and hazards, build knowledge around relocations, and to identify best practice and existing relevant frameworks. This gap-analysis led to an understanding of the constraints and opportunities that exist in the housing policy environment, as well as market and environmental contexts. The assessment and analysis of the Liberian context revealed the following:

- **The challenging urban environment.** Fourteen years of civil war and the Ebola crisis have significantly contributed to the inadequate and hazardous conditions that the vast majority of urban residents live in. The civil war resulted in the collapse of the country's financial system and urban infrastructure. The government faces huge are challenges in terms of capacity and resources to meet the urban population's existing and growing needs for housing, basic services and infrastructure.
- **Seventy percent of the urban population lives in slum settlements around greater Monrovia.** Many households and settlements are affected by locational hazards such as sea erosion, river/estuary flooding and informal land reclamation; climatic hazards related to surface flooding; and non-climatic hazards related to poor hygiene, disease vectors, blocked storm-water drains and inadequate housing.



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- **Climatically, Monrovia is the wettest capital in the world.** Due to poor citywide drainage systems, most city and slum settlements are affected by seasonal flooding, which harms livelihoods such as informal trading, the construction sector and businesses that require goods and services to be transported by road across the country.
- **The land administration system is weak,** as a consequence of years of civil war and is fragmented among many government agencies. The Land Rights Bill of 2014 still has not been passed by the Legislature. The bill seeks to clearly define and delineate the different categories of land ownership and land rights and establish clear procedures and processes for land acquisition, use, management and administration. Currently, tenure insecurity is high, as secure tenure depends on a functional land administration system and sound land policies. Because of these systemic inadequacies, residents lack formal titles to their land, live in fear of eviction, and struggle to find property where they could reside legally.
- **Zoning laws and building regulations are outdated,** and there is no comprehensive land-use planning to guide urban development. The majority of urban residents live in unplanned settlements with no secure tenure or basic services on public or private land that is either legally or illegally occupied.
- **The Liberian housing market is highly complex and dysfunctional,** which is reflected in the uneven delivery of housing-related products and services to homeowners and renters, the high cost of building materials that are mainly imported and the high level of informality. There is also a huge discrepancy in quality and cost of homes between high-income and low-income households. Both public- and private-sector capacity in Liberia are very low and will require ongoing support in order to improve the value chain for affordable housing.
- **Affordability levels are low.** Sixty-four percent of Liberians live below the national poverty line. On average, low-income households use only fifteen percent of household expenditures



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for housing costs. In general, the accepted standard is that housing costs should consume no more than forty percent of household expenditure. This is much lower in Liberia because low-income households prioritize other pressing needs, such as food, education and health care. Middle-income households base most construction decisions principally on price, not quality, as a consequence of low affordability levels.

- **Public- and private-sector capacity is limited and weak.** Because of limited resources and tough economic and social conditions, public institutions and private-sector firms have limited capacity to perform their functions across the board, particularly in support of slum upgrading and delivery of affordable housing.

4.2. Processes of stakeholder engagement

After the background review, the main objective was to ensure an inclusive and transparent decision-making process. Within the NHA, a Policy Interventions Committee (PIC) was created to support the design and implementation of the policy interventions and to deal with the challenges identified as part of the review process. The PIC helped to provide expert advice on relocation guidelines and related issues and acted as a trusted resource, stakeholder, and subject matter expert. It helped to identify, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding policy and relocation guidelines and related issues to be addressed by the committee. It also has had the power to respond to and request, where appropriate, opportunities for consultation with other committees, agencies and experts. Additionally, it has worked to design questions for focus group discussions to determine the socio-economic conditions in a participatory and inclusive manner. This has included determining the level of attachment or ties to the current location and determine sentiments regarding relocation, along with the ability to conduct periodic project visits.

Procedurally, the PIC has also had a key role with HfHI in facilitating local discussions on policy. It has worked to review and incorporate feedback from profiling exercises and FGD discussions, develop mechanisms for ongoing engagement with all stakeholders and has worked to act as a



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forum for policy and guideline-related discussions. To this end, it has also been able to input from other committees with relevance and competence for the relocation guidelines. In an oversight capacity, it has also the power to consider project progress reports for monitoring purposes and identify project challenges, and make recommendations for rectification, where appropriate. This allows it an ability to review project risks and help implement mitigation approaches.

Engaging with local communities was also a vital part of creating the VGRRPG. There are 113 slums in greater Monrovia. Slum Dwellers International (SDI) through their local affiliated YMCA facilitated all the community consultations with the NHA for the development of the VGRRG in 12 slum communities. SDI/YMCA is responsible for community facilitation and settlement profiling in the LCP. The intension of the community consultation process was not to get a representative sample of the population quantitatively but to provide in-depth qualitative community insights. Further community consultations with relocated households and the affected host communities were undertaken. In Phase 1 of the programme, a Community Hazards, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report was developed. This preparatory phase was fundamental to developing an understanding of the macro and community level hazards and vulnerabilities impacting greater Monrovia, and, through the analysis, to identify the actions that are required in consultation with key stakeholders. One of the findings was that relocation, on a voluntary basis, and in a gender responsive manner must be considered.

As Liberia remain vulnerable to a host of risks and hazards, these were classified into four main categories, including: (1) locational; (2) climatic; (3) non-climatic; and (4) broader socio-economic conditions. Under location conditions sea erosion, river flooding, land reclamation; and access and isolation due to roads being flooded and impassable for periods of time were cited. Generic climatic conditions include surface flooding and severe gaps in the drainage system, winds and storms with associated lightning. Non-climate conditions were related to a lack of tenure security, fires, hygiene and sanitation concerns as well as infestation and disease vectors. The socio-economic conditions highlighted serious economic vulnerabilities related to unemployment and underemployment, food insecurity and gaps in the education and health systems. These risk



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categories were then used to classify communities according to their vulnerability, helping to target the community intervention in a more responsive manner. This is summarized in Table 1, which lists communities according to their risk/hazard category and informed the consultation process of nature of local challenges.

Table 1: Categorization of communities according to primary hazard, risks or vulnerability.

Type of Hazard or Risks	Community
Locational (Sea Erosion, River Flooding, Land Reclamation, Access/Isolation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Point • Popo Beach • Doe Community
Climatic (Surface flooding and drainage, wind & storm, and lightning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clara Town • Doe Community • Gobyechop Community
Non-Climatic Risks & Vulnerabilities (Land tenure, fire, hygiene and sanitation, infection and disease vectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace Island • Buzzy Quarters • Wein Town
Social and Economic Condition (Poverty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Gray • Battery Factory • Chicken Soup Factory

In addition to community-level engagement, HfHI and its partners identified 23 governmental and non-governmental organizations that needed to be consulted on the VGRPPG agenda. Out of these the LCP reached out and consulted with 11 of these including: the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Ministry of Public Works (Zoning Department); the Liberia Land Authority; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Liberia Refugees Repatriation and Resettlement Commission; the National WASH Commission; the National Disaster Management Agency; the Monrovia City Corporation; the Liberia Marketing Association; the International Organization on Migration; and the Federation of Petty Traders and Informal Workers Union of Liberia (FEPTIWUL). This process



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has allowed for a broader awareness of the implications of the voluntary relocation process and a validation of the findings. The VGRRPG will be finalized through consultative process that includes discussion and validations through roundtable discussion, city forum and with the NHA PIC team that has been vital to its creation.

5. Findings: Towards a people-centered, participatory, and human rights-based approach

In reviewing the experience of the LCP, HfHI and its associated partners within government as well as multi-lateral and human rights organizations in relation to the planning and implementation of relocations, this summary paper has reflected upon the importance of adopting a participatory approach to policy decision-making in a controversial area such as voluntary relocation. This has meant having meaningful consultations with affected households in building an understanding of local needs and priorities, as well as raised awareness around how policy implementation should be should be conducted in ways that respect and protects the dignity and rights of those affected.

While the primary motivation behind voluntary relocations is to protect the loss of life and property of vulnerable communities, there is an implicit understanding that this only occurs when no other feasible alternatives are available. Therefore, there has to be robust evidence and a sound legal basis for undertaking any planned relocation. In and of themselves, relocations are complex processes that involve several stages and require thorough planning and engagement with stakeholders at every stage of the process. A participatory approach is central to the planning and implementation of relocation schemes, this should include consultation with affected communities and potential host communities, and sessions with the government departments responsible for any piece of the relocation process. Clear processes and mechanisms are required for decision-making and community feedback.

Fundamentally, the challenge with relocations is that they significantly impact on a local community's sense of security, their livelihoods, their social and economic networks and perceptions of cultural heritage. This in turn affects the resilience of those communities as they



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rebuild their lives after relocation. Consultations should therefore be used as a tool to identify household priorities such as food, education, health, basic services, housing and livelihoods. Vulnerable communities should have the right to request for a planned relocation, as well as challenge a planned relocation.

These assumption, seen in the context of Liberia's experience of the VGRPPG shows that if done well and in a participatory and consultative manner, voluntary planned relocations can contribute towards opportunities to reduce disasters and protect against climate change through the creation of well-located better-serviced communities that are more inclusive, viable and resilient. The identification of land, whether green-field, infill or brownfield, needs to be part of a broader city-wide urban planning process. The potential solutions for voluntary relocations need to consider both relocation to new settlements, densification and infill potential in existing viable settlements. When relocations involve a host community, the interventions implemented should consider the needs and priorities of the host community as well in facilitating greater social integration. Different tenure arrangements are required for households who are being relocated, including private ownership or rental arrangements for alternative accommodation.

6. Conclusions

In the context of rapid urbanization, population growth and environmental challenges, the reality is that voluntary relocation will be needed to prevent loss of life and property of vulnerable households and communities. This makes necessary the requirement to development voluntary relocation guidelines that respond to local needs and priorities. Without an evidence-based and participatory approach that first identifies the gaps in current practice, and then uses consultation and collaboration with affected communities and other stakeholders to develop an effective framework to respond to these challenges, the problem of contested relocation that further marginalizes slum dwellers will continue. For this not to happen, there is a need to go beyond current practice in developing an informed approach that takes into consideration gender, livelihoods, location, cultural heritage, tenure, social networks, and host communities. Together,



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this constitutes a necessary part of enhancing the policy environment to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban development, and achieving the goals of the NUA and the SDGs. The example used in this paper to illustrate such a process was the creation of the VGRRPG in Liberia, which has undertaken this approach in responding to local environmental challenges.

As the Liberian case highlights, understanding government roles, responsibilities and capacity is fundamental to supporting the successful implementation of policy guidelines. Government entities need to revise their mandates, operational setup and budgets to incorporate these types of interventions as they serve vulnerable and low-income communities. There needs to be political buy-in and support for urban development that is inclusive and addresses social inequalities. Although this paper has discussed a single aspect of the LCP's work, as a whole the City Alliance-led programme emphasizes the need to go beyond just relocating communities and providing the bare minimum in-terms of development support. Rather, to find solutions and support the creation of sustainable and secure communities much more needs to be done to make sure policies do respond to gender and other concerns.

Further, it is essential that tenure status given to relocated households and that existing land administration systems are able to accommodate such voluntary relocations. More effort needs to be put into helping governments to explore the best options to find permanent solutions and increase tenure security. A multi-scalar, multi-stakeholder approach is central to ensuring that all affected parties are consulted and engaged with and that resources, technical expertise and local knowledge in the community, public and private sectors are tapped to ensure longer-term resilience and sustainability. Overall, this paper has sought to highlight the importance of utilizing evidence-based approaches, planning systems, consultative processes and a people-centered and human rights-based approach to improve urban resilience and the quality of life of vulnerable and low-income communities. Thus, reiterating the need for effective interventions in contexts such as those related to environmental challenges.



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To conclude, in-order to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (SDG 11), there is need to change the discussion surrounding relocation strategies, and go beyond a narrow focus on simply tenure status and property rights. Dimensions such as gender, urban livelihoods, employment, social networks and community linkages need to be re-emphasized in relation to relocation strategies in fulfilling the mandate to create people-centered, participatory, and human rights-based approaches for sustainable development outcomes.

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