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RETURN POLICY FRAMEWORK

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

11 July 2009

The Government of the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan will undertake the implementation of voluntary, safe and dignified return of people internally displaced from NWFP areas. The return will be guided by the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that enshrine freedom of movement. It will also be guided by related internationally recognized guiding principles.

The following complementary principles will guide the return:

- The Government of NWFP at all levels assumes that assistance and the protection of the IDPs to be its first and foremost responsibility and is committed to act within the frame of the international principles and standards applicable.
- Voluntariness in decision-making implies that a decision to return, relocate or integrate locally is self-determined from a number of viable options. That a return is voluntary and requires that IDPs make an informed choice, without coercion, and that the will to return is clearly expressed.
- The end of dislocation is the full restoration and enjoyment of a person's human rights, in a non-discriminatory manner, and is a process through which the need for specialized assistance and protection diminishes over time.
- The return will be undertaken in safety. The Government will ensure that protection from violence, threats, intimidation or risks to physical integrity prevails in the areas of return, integration or relocation. This condition applies to transit areas or routes that displaced people will use.
- While the return of people to their homes is the preferred and most dignified solution, return-like relocation or local integration- will be considered and people will be allowed to stay in camps if required.
- The Government commits to provide respectful treatment of IDPs by authorities and proper consultation and participation of IDPs throughout all stages of the process, taking into account the different views of girls, boys, women, men, older persons and diverse population groups.
- The international community, with the support of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the facilitation of OCHA, has the responsibility to support the Government of NWFP in this endeavor by providing the additional capacity and the expertise that it will need in order to fulfill its obligations.

Signed in Peshawar, the 11 of July 2009

Mr. Azam Khan

Provincial Relief Commissioner

On behalf of the

Government of NWFP

Felipe Camargo

on behalf of the

Humanitarian Coordinator of the

United Nations, Peshawar.