Statement by Mr. Chaloka Beyani

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Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to present my annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations today. As this year has marked the end of the first term of my mandate, I wish to express my appreciation to Member States, United Nations and other international and non-governmental organisations that have been supportive of my mandate throughout the years. My report to you today provides an overview of the main activities I have undertaken on the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) since the last time I addressed this honorable Assembly. It also contains a thematic section regarding the critical role of humanitarian and development actors in achieving durable solutions for IDPs through peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict. Let me share with you the country visits I have conducted since my last report to the General Assembly. From 14 to 22 November 2012, I undertook an official country visit to Sudan, at the invitation of the Government. I had the opportunity to meet displacement-affected communities in Northern, Western and Southern Darfur but was unable to visit Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States for security reasons. I commend the Government of Sudan, in cooperation with the international community, for their combined efforts to tackle both the causes and consequences of internal displacement. Although progress has been made, significant challenges to improve basic living conditions for internally displaced persons and to implement durable solutions within the Doha Framework Agreement still remain, and I call upon all relevant actors to seize the available opportunities so as to bring about sustainable peace and durable solutions on an inclusive basis. I also urge the Government of Sudan to embrace a comprehensive framework for the protection of the human rights of IDPs by ratifying the Kampala Convention and to adopt implementing legislation at the earliest opportunity. At the Government’s request, I also conducted a follow-up mission to Georgia from 10 to 14 June 2013. I visited collective centres and settlements for IDPs in Western Georgia and held meetings with IDPs. I commend the Government’s commitment to improve the living conditions of persons displaced in the 1990s and provide durable housing to those displaced by the conflict in 2008. I would like to recommend an integrated approach to addressing the situation of all waves of IDPs in Georgia in accordance with the international standards contained in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. I note with satisfaction the steps taken by the Government to revise the law on IDPs to this end. I recently completed a country visit to Serbia and Kosovo*, and also met with IDPs, and it is clear that there is now a window of opportunity to find durable solutions after 14 years of protracted displacement. I commend the Government of Serbia and the authorities in Kosovo* for their positive efforts, willingness and commitment to work jointly to implement durable solutions for internally displaced persons. I will provide details of my visit in my next report to the Human Rights Council in 2014. I am scheduled to conduct missions to South Sudan and Sri Lanka respectively in November and December 2013. Since my last report, I have made or reiterated country visit requests to a number of countries, including Bangladesh, Colombia, Haiti, Myanmar, the Philippines and the Syrian Arab Republic, amongst others, and take this opportunity to thank the governments which have already agreed to future missions of my mandate. Upon this Assembly’s request, I submitted a report on the “dire situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Syrian Arab Republic in terms of safety and their basic rights and livelihoods, and to provide recommendations with a view to meeting assistance and protection needs and strengthening the effectiveness of the international response to displacement. I provided an overview of the humanitarian, protection and human rights situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria, an analysis of challenges in meeting the urgent needs of affected communities, and a set of initial recommendations, including considerations to guide durable solutions to internal displacement. The report is based on a comprehensive desk review of existing information and analysis on Syria, as well

* Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.
as various briefings and written inputs provided by a variety of stakeholders, including United Nations counterparts, international organizations, the Government of Syria and civil society. I would like to thank all stakeholders who contributed information at very short notice, and the Government of Syria for their written inputs and comments, as well as their invitation to visit Syria. In this respect, while a country visit was agreed in principal, I look forward to agreeing mutually suitable dates with the Government early next for a future visit, security conditions permitting.

Mr. Chairperson,

I am pleased to report on my continuing collaboration with regional and international organisations. Over the course of this reporting period, I have engaged with African States and the African Union with respect to the promotion, ratification and implementation of the Kampala Convention at the national level, including holding a special workshop, jointly with the African Union, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for Senior Government officials and other actors in Kampala, 2-6 September 2013. I also had the opportunity to address the Human Dimension Committee of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to raise awareness on my work and the important connections between durable solutions and national and regional security in the OSCE area. I continued my commitment in inter-agency processes and maintained close cooperation with all relevant actors to mainstream the human rights of IDPs, notably by participating actively in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Global Protection Cluster, amongst others. The present report builds on the long-standing commitment on the part of my predecessors and myself to support efforts aimed at resolving displacement and reflects my decision to make durable solutions for IDPs a priority of the second term of this mandate. It is fundamental to recognize the need for a paradigm shift which addresses displacement not only as a humanitarian concern, but also as a development and peacebuilding challenge in the period after armed conflict. In this sense, I am pleased to note a number of important new opportunities to address this gap between humanitarian and development actors, including decision No. 2011/20 of the Policy Committee, in which the Secretary-General endorsed the preliminary framework on ending displacement in the aftermath of conflict, which establishes priorities and responsibilities to support the delivery of durable solutions for IDPs and refugees returning to their country of origin. While acknowledging and aiming to strengthen the value of these endeavors through my report, I wish to recall that the primary responsibility to facilitate durable solutions to displacement lies with States. In accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, such solutions include sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (return), sustainable local integration in areas where IDPs take refuge (local integration) and sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country). The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons indicates that a “durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement” (see A/HRC/13/21/Add.4). It is fundamental to recognize the complementarity of the IASC Framework and of the Secretary-General’s Framework. An integrated implementation of the two frameworks is particularly important to assess the extent to which durable solutions have been achieved, using the criteria and indicators identified in the IASC Framework. I note that achieving durable solutions depends to varying degrees on progress in responding to structural challenges. This includes ensuring that urban planning, environmental protection, security sector reform, natural resource management and tenure reform efforts are effective and consider the particular concerns facing IDPs. Housing, land and property are among the most complex structural concerns that must be tackled in order to enable durable solutions. Poorly conceived responses to the housing, land and property concerns of IDPs can have significant implications for gender equity, relations between displaced and non-displaced communities, they can lead to land-grabbing and dim prospects for economic development. Achieving durable solutions requires leadership and accountability on the part of national, local and international actors. While reiterating the primary responsibility and leading role of States in facilitating durable solutions, international actors also have an important role to play to strengthen these aspects. In particular, they can support the resilience of individuals and communities. This should occur both in the prevention of
displacement and in the early aftermath of displacement so as to avoid the exacerbation of vulnerability and poverty in the longer term. As many post-conflict contexts and, in particular, situations of protracted displacement demonstrate, the resolution of internal displacement situations calls for a collaborative approach and consolidated efforts by all actors involved in the process – humanitarian, human rights, development and peacebuilding actors. Once again, I wish to stress that States bear the primary responsibility for finding durable solutions for IDPs based on the recognition of such persons’ right to choose between the options of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. However, international and national organizations, along with donor States, should support States facing the complex challenge of finding durable solutions, in meeting the humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and human rights demands of such a long process of ending displacement. In my report, I make a set of recommendations intended for States affected by displacement, donor States and the international community. These recommendations on prevention and durable solutions strategies are based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the relevant aspects of the Kampala Convention, the IASC Framework and the Secretary-General’s Framework, which are the pertinent tools to tackle all stages of internal displacement. It is crucial that affected States develop national frameworks, structures and policies on internal displacement that specifically address chronic barriers to solutions, including access to justice mechanisms and transitional justice, protection of and access to housing, land and property rights, and the re-establishment of livelihoods as an essential element to build the resilience of internally displaced persons. It is also imperative to include durable solutions in national and local development plans, poverty reduction and alleviation plans, national economic reconstruction plans, transition plans, urban development plans and peacebuilding and stabilization efforts. I also stress the need to undertake early, participatory and joint planning in support of durable solutions, ensuring the engagement of local authorities. Such cross-sectorial planning may require adapting to institutional cultures and policies, including funding parameters, to enable the provision of longer-term support for durable solutions and facilitate the engagement of development and peacebuilding actors. With regard to donor States, I strongly encourage them to implement strategic donor leadership as well as recognize the need to resolve displacement as an essential element of effective transitions, conflict resolution and prevention, economic reconstruction, stabilization efforts, resilience-building, disaster risk reduction efforts and peacebuilding. Moreover, I urge the international community – relevant international organisations, including humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors – to integrate durable solutions into strategic plans and frameworks. Given its humanitarian, development, human rights and peacebuilding concerns, the IASC Framework provides a widely recognized basis to strengthen cross-sectorial leadership on the resolution of internal displacement. I commend UNHCR and UNDP for their work in the implementation of the Secretary-General’s Framework under the leadership of relevant HC/RCs and encourage them to continue such work and promote the application of the IASC Framework in the development of durable solutions strategies in that context. The international community needs to ensure the early and systematic engagement of humanitarian and development actors, and all other relevant sectors, to develop solution strategies and identify mechanisms to promote an integrated approach to solutions from the early stages of displacement onwards. It is important for context-specific barriers to durable solutions in national policies or legislation to be addressed so that the application of such policies or legislation can be informed through the careful profiling of displacement situations. States and United Nations country teams are therefore encouraged to consider drawing on the services of specialized actors, such as the Joint IDP Profiling Service, to collect, update, analyse and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data on internal displacement and to develop tools to monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of durable solutions based on the IASC Framework. The international community must ensure that the post-2015 development agenda benefits people, including IDPs, who live in fragile States, and that it serves as a foundation for increasing their resilience to crisis, including through the achievement of solutions to displacement that are human-rights based. Finally, I would like to thank this Assembly once again for the continuous support provided to my mandate. Thank you.