

Fleeing Floods, Earthquakes, Droughts and Rising Sea Levels

**12 Lessons Learned
About Protecting People
Displaced by Disasters
and the Effects of Climate
Change**



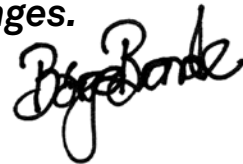
Between 2008 and 2014 more than 184 million people were displaced by disasters. Projections for the future indicate that previously unprecedented extreme weather events may become the norm rather than the exception and consequently, are likely to increase displacement and migration, including across international borders. The reality of disaster displacement not only calls for enhanced action now and in the future to better protect disaster displaced persons but also underlines the importance and relevance of the Nansen Initiative.

Didier Burkhalter, Foreign Minister, Government of Switzerland



As a result of the Nansen Initiative consultations we now know a lot more about the impacts of disasters and climate change on displacement and migration, and have identified effective practices currently used to prevent, prepare for and respond to such challenges.

Børge Brende, Foreign Minister, Government of Norway



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Every year, millions of people are forcibly displaced by floods, tropical storms, earthquakes, droughts, glacial melting, and other natural hazards. Many find refuge within their own country but some have to move abroad. In the context of climate change, such displacement is likely to increase. National and international responses to this challenge are insufficient, and protection for affected people remains inadequate.

Launched in October 2012 by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, the Nansen Initiative is a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on the development of an Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change.

To feed the process with good practices and build a knowledge base, the Nansen Initiative has held inter-governmental Regional Consultations and civil society meetings in the Pacific, the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe to explore the protection and assistance needs of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change. This booklet presents the main lessons learned and conclusions reached over the course of this three-year consultative process.

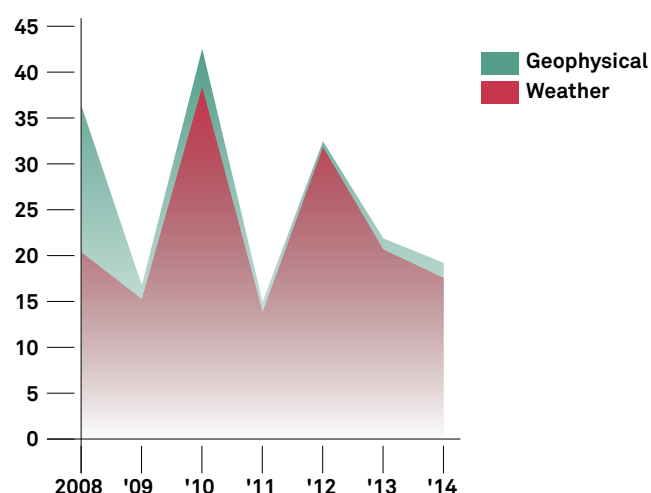
1 Disaster Displacement: One of the Biggest Humanitarian Challenges of the 21st Century.

The water came at night and we didn't have time to save our belongings; we had to choose whether to save our children and ourselves or our property and assets, so we chose to save our kids. We left everything and ran to save our lives.

Unnamed survivor of the 2010 floods, Pakistan*

Do you remember images in the media from the Haiti earthquake? More than 1.5 million people were left homeless. Do you remember the impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004? An estimated 2.2 million people lost their homes, with many ending up living in camps, collective shelters or with host families. In 2013, Cyclone Haiyan/Yolanda in the Philippines also displaced four million people. More recently in April 2015 in Nepal, half a million people fled after the devastating earthquake.

2008–2014: 184 million disaster displaced persons

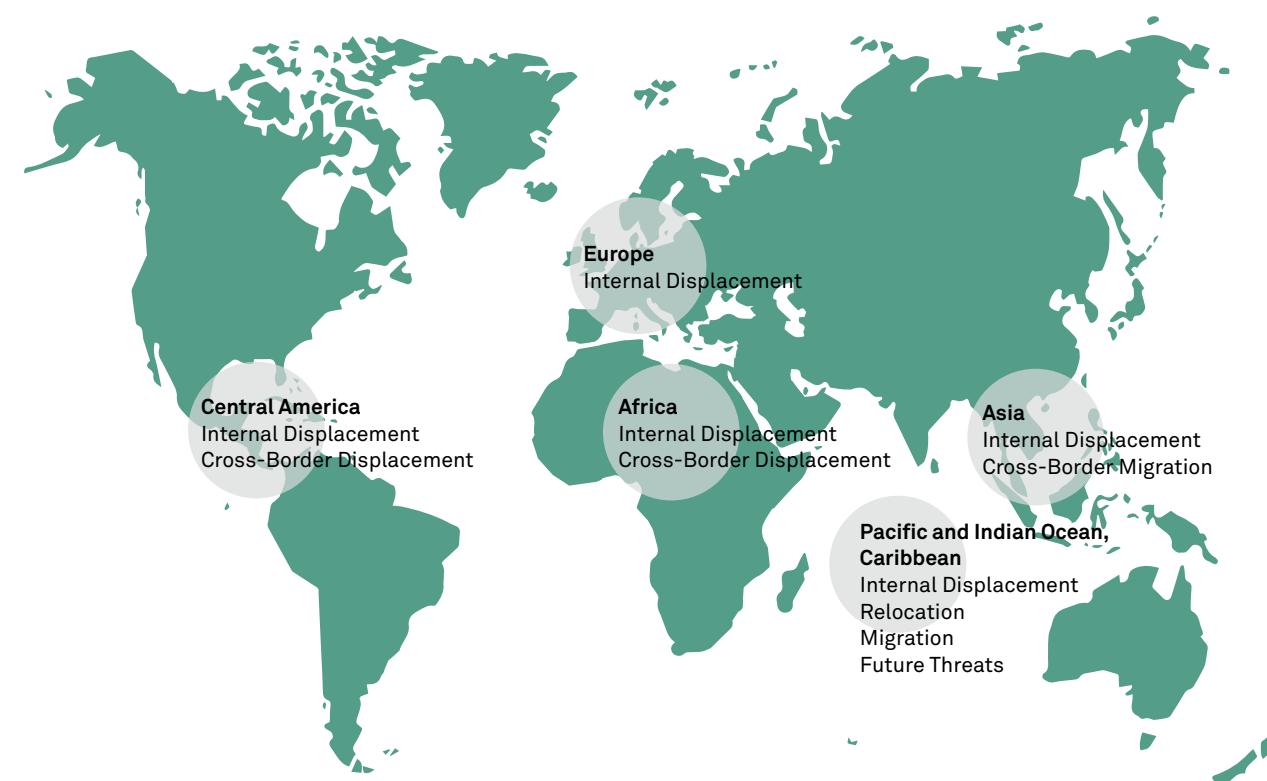


According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), between 2008 and 2014 a total of **184 million people were displaced by disasters, an average of 26.4 million people newly displaced each year. That is the equivalent of one person per second, one blink, one clap, one breath.** Today the annual number of newly displaced persons is larger than those displaced each year by armed conflict.

While the global number of people displaced by slow-onset natural hazards like drought is not known, in 2011–12 some 1.3 million Somalis were internally displaced, with 290,000 people seeking refuge across international borders in the context of the Horn of Africa drought crisis and instability within Somalia.

Displacement is a devastating experience. Those who are forced to leave their homes may end up finding safety elsewhere, but they pay a heavy price. They leave behind their property, livelihoods, community ties and all they cherished. Dreams are shattered and hopes are gone, with it often taking months and years to rebuild normal lives.

2 Uncertain Journeys, at Times Across a Border.



During and after disasters, most displaced families find refuge within their own country. Some will be able to return home soon, but others may have to move beyond borders to another country to reach safety, protection and assistance.

Displacement across international borders in the context of disasters is already a reality in some regions of the world. In Africa, such displacement largely occurs within the context of flooding and drought, but also volcanic eruptions. In Central and South America, hurricanes, flooding, landslides and earthquakes most frequently lead to cross-border disaster-displacement.

Although the adverse impacts of climate change have already prompted population movements in the Pacific region, cross-border disaster-displacement is not yet a large-scale phenomenon. In the future, rising sea levels, submergence, coastal flooding, and erosion may seriously affect the territorial integrity of small island developing States, and thus force their populations to move internally, but also abroad.

As a continent, Asia has the highest number of internally displaced people as a consequence of tropical storms, earthquakes, landslides and large-scale flooding. Some countries have already experienced significant land loss due to rising sea levels that has triggered displacement and internal migration. While instances of cross-border disaster-displacement have been rare in Asia, there is some evidence that the impacts of natural hazards and climate change contribute to people migrating abroad. Within Europe, although earthquakes and flooding have displaced a number of people, there is little evidence of significant displacement or migration to other countries.

Despite the difficulties of quantitative projections, these scenarios call for increased preparedness, solidarity and cooperation by all. At some point, potentially every country could be confronted with cross-border disaster-displacement, either as a place of destination, transit or origin.

The islands of Guna Yala, an autonomous region of the Guna people on Panama's northern coast (365 islands, 3260 km²), face the threat of completely disappearing as a result of severe weather and a rising sea level. The Gardi Surdub, where 200 families live (some 1,000 people), also face a similar fate. The affected communities will all soon have to move to the mainland, even before such future scenarios, as their islands already have too little space and insufficient drinking water.



3 “Natural” Disasters?

While hazards are a force of nature, disasters are not natural. Disasters occur when a community, society or country is not sufficiently prepared to cope with the impacts of a hazard. In this sense “natural” disasters have multiple causes, many of which are human made.

Whether a natural hazard develops into a disaster depends on where and when it strikes, and whom it hits. In February 2010, one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded with a magnitude of 8.8 struck Chile and killed 562 people in several regions of the country. One month earlier in Haiti, another earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 killed more than 220,000 children, women and men, and left 1.5 million people homeless. The same year, same continent, but why was there such destruction in Haiti when the earthquake in Chile was so much stronger? The answer is simple: Chile was better prepared to withstand the shock.

Earthquakes themselves do not kill. It is usually the building, the bridge, or the house collapsing on people that result in death and injury. In Haiti, houses and apartments were overcrowded, construction codes were not respected and Haitians were not trained on how to respond to earthquakes, such as by sheltering away from windows or under tables. In contrast, Chile had undertaken significant investments to make buildings earthquake-proof and to train its population.

There are several tools and policies available to reduce the risk of being displaced. The frequency and intensity

of weather- and climate-related **natural hazards** can be influenced through climate change mitigation efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases. We have an unprecedented opportunity to act in December 2015, when nations of the world gather in Paris at the Climate Change Conference to sign a new climate change agreement.

The **exposure** of populations to natural hazards can be reduced, for example, by assisting individuals or families living in disaster-prone areas to voluntarily migrate within their country or abroad to seek alternative opportunities and avoid situations that are likely to develop into a humanitarian crisis situation and displacement. Another option for reducing exposure is to undertake planned relocation processes that help individuals move to safer areas, either before or after a disaster hits.

The last variable we can influence is the level of a family or community's **vulnerability** to a natural hazard, by building their capacity to withstand and recover from the impacts of hazards. Developing solutions to adapt to a changing climate, like improving water retention in agriculture areas, and implementing disaster risk reduction measures, like planting and restoring mangroves to provide a coastal buffer from storm surges. Such options contribute to building livelihood systems that are more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and the effects of climate change, which can ultimately help to avoid disaster displacement.

The millions of lives devastated by disasters is more often a consequence of bad man-made structures and policies, than the forces of mother nature. A flood is not in itself a disaster, the catastrophic consequences happen when people are neither prepared nor protected when it hits.

Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Displacement = HAZARD + EXPOSURE + VULNERABILITY
so, avoiding displacement means reducing:

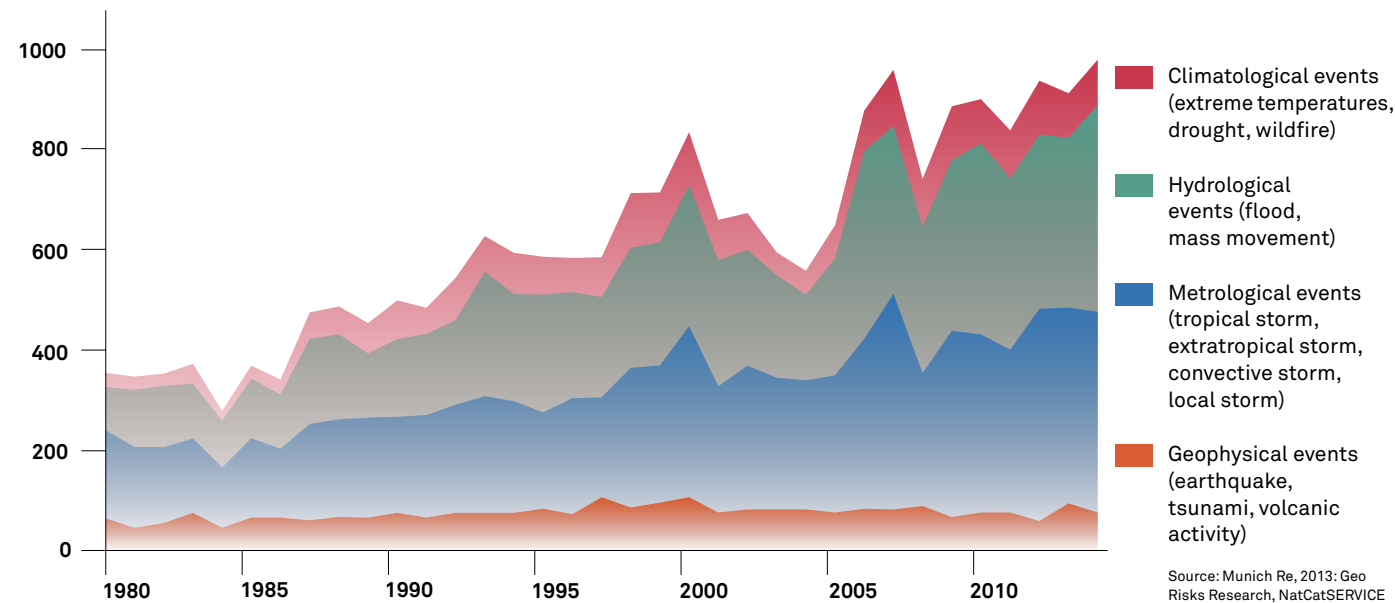
- HAZARD** → Climate change mitigation
- EXPOSURE** → Migration as adaption
Planned relocation
- VULNERABILITY** → Climate change adaption
Disaster risk reduction
Resilience building



The dam, meant to protect the village of Matmora on the riverbanks of the Brahmaputra, must be reinforced and maintained anew each year.

4 An Emergent Crisis: Climate Change Will Force Even More People to Move in the Future.

Number of events related to natural hazards causing loss of lives and assets.



Regular reports from a United Nations scientific body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), keep warning that climate change will disrupt weather patterns. This will lead to desertification and stronger and more frequent storms, and result in additional sea level rise. Such changes threaten human settlements, infrastructure, natural resources and associated livelihoods, and are likely to prompt even more people to flee.

Some projections suggest that a one meter rise in sea level could mean that 150 million people will have to leave their homes unless the construction of dams, sea-walls and similar measures are undertaken to protect vulnerable areas.

Due to eroding coastlines and the salination of soil and groundwater caused by more frequent high tides and tropical storms, low-lying atoll island States like Kiribati and Tuvalu in the South Pacific will become uninhabitable long before rising water covers the land.

The time to act is now.

Climate change is projected to increase displacement of people [...] Populations that lack the resources for planned migration experience higher exposure to extreme weather events [...] Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts.
IPCC Fifth Assessment Summary for Policymakers, 2014

Large numbers of people move out quietly to avoid stress. My region is not the only one. In many parts of Bangladesh, climate change ground zero is real.

Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

I've tried to tell the world of the problem we're facing in Kiribati, about climate change. There is no question, the world has heard it, but the question is, what will they do about it?

Anote Tong, President of Kiribati

I am very worried. The snow and ice are disappearing and melting day by day, year by year. The sun is stronger. It doesn't snow as much. We are very concerned... There could be a tremendous drought. There might be no more snow, no more water coming down. So how would we irrigate our plots of land? My son would have to leave and go somewhere else, to other countries.

Lucia Quispe, Khapi, Bolivia*

* Oxfam Bolivia, 2009. Bolivia Climate change, poverty and adaptation. 1st ed. La Paz: Oxfam.



Pacific island countries like Kiribati struggle with the impacts of internal migration. Many people move to the main island in the hope of a better life and job opportunities. This, in turn, leads to high population density coupled with challenges such as ensuring adequate waste management and providing drinking water. On Kiribati, many people seek distractions from their daily cares by playing bingo, an extremely popular pastime.

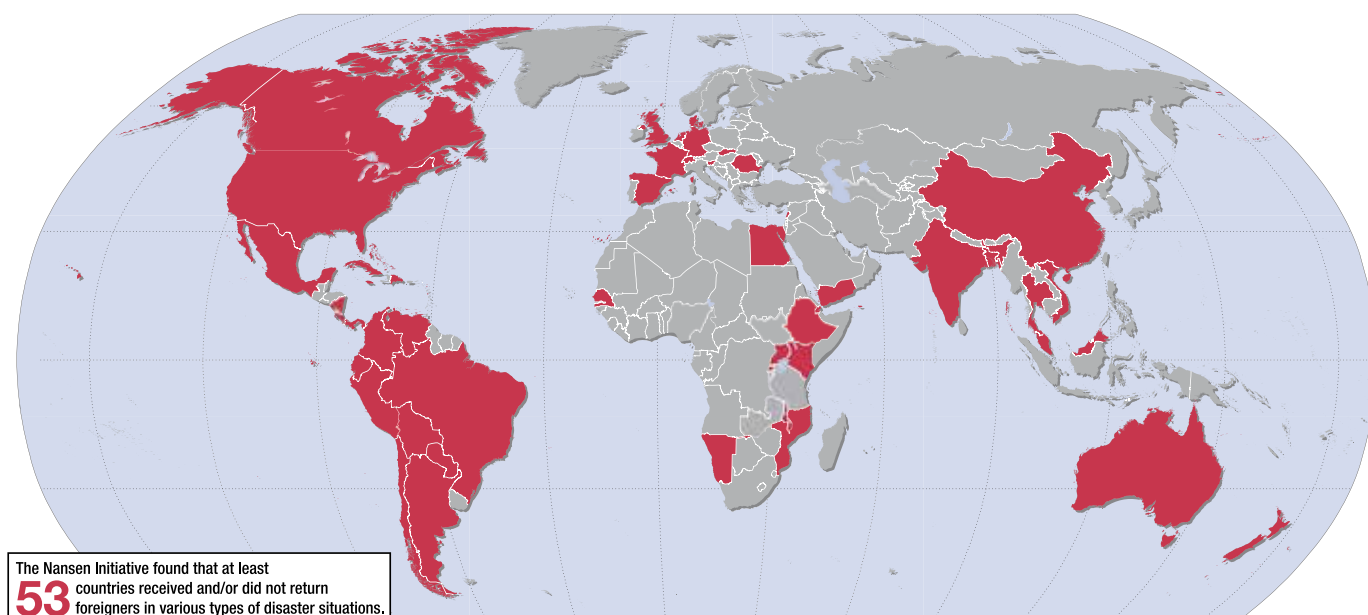
5 As of Today, One in Four States Around the World Has Already Received or Not Returned People from Disaster-Affected Countries.

The overall number of cross-border disaster-displaced persons is unknown. But we do know that in recent decades, at least 50 countries – one in four states on Earth – have received or refrained from deporting children, women and men affected by disasters.

While present global data on disaster displaced persons cover “*only the incidence of displacement, and not where displaced people flee to or where they eventually settle*” (IDMC), prominent examples of cross-border flight or non-return in disaster situations include the 1998 Hurricane Mitch, the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2011–12 drought in Somalia and, more recently, the 2015 flooding in Southern Africa and the 2015 Kathmandu Valley earthquake.

In recent decades, at least 50 countries have received or refrained from returning persons from disaster-affected countries. While this figure is certainly incomplete, it illustrates that cross-border disaster-displacement is a challenge that potentially confronts every country in the world.

Countries That Received and/or Did Not Return Disaster-Affected Foreigners



6 Why Cross-Border Disaster-Displaced People Are Not Usually Refugees.

People who are forced to cross an international border in the context of a disaster and the adverse effects of climate change have limited protection when they knock at the door of another country. They will likely not be considered refugees under international refugee law. Human rights law does not give them a right to be admitted to another country and be allowed to stay. This is a serious legal gap for a situation that is likely to happen more and more often.

Refugees are people who flee to other countries because they are persecuted or victims of armed conflict and human rights violations. They are recognized as refugees abroad if the government or a powerful non-state actor turns against them so that they cannot find protection within their own country.

Persons displaced across borders in the context of a disaster may find themselves in a refugee-like situation, but international refugee law does not recognize them as refugees as long as persecution and violence are absent. However, where persecution occurs in the aftermath of a disaster, e.g. as a consequence of a breakdown of law and order, or when a disaster occurs amidst an armed conflict that makes it

impossible for humanitarian actors to access and provide assistance to disaster survivors, States may determine that they qualify as refugees.

Consequently, the refugee framework will not adequately address all cross-border disaster-displacement situations, such as when disaster-affected people urgently need to access life-saving medical assistance, when the closest route to safety is in a neighbouring country, or when a country is simply too overwhelmed by the disaster to adequately receive their own citizens back who may be abroad when a disaster occurs.

Therefore, rather than calling for a new binding international convention on “climate refugees”, the approach put forward by the Nansen Initiative’s ‘Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Disaster-Displaced Persons’ is to present a broad set of effective practices that have already been used, drawing on migration law, human rights law and refugee law, that States and other actors could integrate in their own laws, policies and frameworks to respond to their own specific situations and challenges.

And since there was the war, we did not receive any support from the government. Therefore, there are combined factors that made us suffer: droughts and war. If war did not exist, then we might have been able to stay, but now that the land is looted, there is no way for us to claim it.

Elderly farmer from Somalia, interviewed at Nakivale Settlement, Uganda*

The tragedy is that this population which is obliged to move doesn't have a legal framework for protection like refugees... There is a void in terms of their protection.

António Guterres, UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees

Karamoja, a semi-arid plain of over 27,000 km² in northeastern Uganda, is home to the Karamojong, a semi-nomadic tribe of pastoralists. For decades, armed conflicts have been the daily fare, with disputes linked to cattle raids, defending water sources and pasture, as well as competing land claims. Particular problems arise during the dry season when pastoralists from Kenya come to Uganda in search of water and grazing areas.





A gathering of the Karamojong and Turkana (a Kenyan ethnic group), as well as government representatives from Kenya and Uganda, takes place in a dried riverbed near Lokiriama, Kenya. The gathering is discussing a pastoralist from Uganda who allegedly had been shot and killed by a Kenyan who never was caught. At the meeting, the victim's family is symbolically offered 30 goats as satisfaction, and a dialogue is facilitated in an effort to prevent any potential armed acts of reprisal.

7 Protecting People Beyond Borders – Let's Learn from Existing Practices.

Although persons fleeing across borders in disaster contexts are not adequately protected under international law, some countries have developed laws, policies and practices to admit and allow them to stay temporarily. Such knowledge and practice already exist. Let's draw from it, work together to harmonize it, and replicate it wherever it is needed.

In the absence of clear provisions in international law, some States in the Americas, in Africa and in Europe have developed a multitude of measures that allow them to admit foreigners from disaster-affected countries, at least temporarily, and not send them back home as long as the disaster lasts. Such measures are usually taken a) because the people concerned are directly and seriously affected by the disaster, b) out of solidarity with the disaster-affected country, or c) based upon wider humanitarian considerations.

A first tool that has been used by some States consists of admitting cross-border disaster-displaced persons using their **regular migration laws**. For example, States may give priority to immigration applications submitted by individuals or families from disaster-affected countries, or expand the use of temporary work quotas. The former measure was used by Canada to admit earthquake survivors from Haiti in 2010, and Nepal in 2015.

In some regions, disaster displaced persons may benefit from open borders based on **agreements allowing the free movement of persons** between countries in the region. For example, such an agreement helped earthquake survivors migrate from Christchurch, New Zealand to Australia after the 2010 earthquake. In Western Africa, the ECOWAS agreement on the free movement of persons allows people from drought stricken areas to temporarily migrate to cities in neighbouring countries, make a living and send money back home until the rains come.

A third tool is to admit cross-border disaster-displaced persons relies upon a variety of **exceptional migration measures**. The laws of some States provide for what is sometimes called a “humanitarian visa” or “temporary protection” status to temporarily admit individuals who cannot safely return to their own country because of the effects of an “environmental catastrophe,” “natural disaster” or “natural or man-made environmental disasters.” Other countries do not have such laws but are able to admit disaster displaced persons based upon an ad hoc decision.

Other countries **refrain from sending back foreigners** who were abroad when the disaster happened in their country of origin, if such persons may face a risk to their life or health at home. It may also be that the country is simply overwhelmed by the disaster and therefore unable to deal with returnees in addition to the disaster-affected population. For example, the United States of America has developed a “Temporary Protected Status” to address such situations.

Finally, States, in exceptional cases, have used **refugee law** or may grant admission based upon similar **protection under human rights law**. The effects of a disaster may generate violence and persecution, such as when a collapse of governmental authority triggered by the disaster leads to violence and unrest, or governments may use a disaster as pretext to persecute its opponents. In the case of the 2011–2012 drought in the Horn of Africa, States in the region applied the 1969 AU Refugee Convention's expanded definition of a refugee for people fleeing Somalia, arguably recognizing as them as victims of an event “seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole” of the country that “compelled” them to seek refuge abroad. A few States in the Americas also granted refugee status to Haitians following the 2010 earthquake given the breakdown in public order following the disaster.

Argentina: Individuals fleeing “natural disasters or environmental disasters caused by man” can obtain the special migratory status of “transitory residents”. Decreto 616, Reglamentación de la Ley de Migraciones N° 25.871 y sus Modificatorias 2010

USA: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) can be granted for nationals of a foreign state if a) there has been an **environmental disaster** in the foreign state resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions; 2. the foreign state is **unable, temporarily**, to handle adequately the return of its own nationals; 3. and the foreign state **officially has requested** such designation. USA, Immigration and Nationality Act, 2002, Section 244.

Sweden: A “person otherwise in need of protection” is someone “who is outside the country of the alien's nationality, because he or she... is unable to return to the country of origin because of an environmental disaster.” Sweden, Alien Act, Chap. 4, S. 2.3.

After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Brazil created a legal channel that allowed Haitians to access Brazilian territory without the use of illegal routes or falling prey to smugglers, with more than 26,000 visas granted to Haitians.

Pedro Dalcero, Minister Counsellor, Delegate from Brazil during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

Drinking water is for sale in the Lumane Casimir settlement in Haiti (25 km outside of the capital of Port-au-Prince), which the government built for families affected by the 2010 earthquake. Because of faulty construction, vandalism and high rents, many houses stand vacant.



8 Building Resilience to Disasters: Surviving, Adapting, Growing, and Staying Home Safe.

States around the world have the responsibility to prepare for disasters and take measures to prevent threats to the lives and property of people, including preventing displacement. Infrastructure improvements, urban planning, land reform, and climate change adaptation measures will contribute to reaching that goal.

Resilience is a key factor in determining whether and how individuals, families, communities and countries can withstand the impacts of natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change. Again, a vulnerable family living in a small shack on a dangerous hill in an urban slum will be much more seriously affected after an earthquake than a family living in a well-built house in the centre of the same city. Undertaking infrastructure improvements in areas where people are most at risk of displacement as well as improving housing, livelihood diversification, education, food security, and health care are all measures that increase people's resilience and help families stay safe at home.

In the Indian region of Assam, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is working with local communities to install flood early warning systems enabled by wireless technology along the Jiadhal and Singara Rivers. The installation provides real time flood information to downstream vulnerable communities, giving them time to prepare and help them stay safe. The project minimizes flood risks and enables people to be better prepared when faced with flooding.

The Philippines regularly deals with disasters brought about by climate change. Typhoon Haiyan was one such example in 2013. Since then, the Philippines has undertaken massive preparedness measures, even enforcing massive evacuation efforts, to save lives.

Mateo G. Montano, Undersecretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

If communities are strengthened and ready beforehand, with solid infrastructure, early warning systems, and other such measures, displacement can be used as a short term coping strategy, or at best be avoided altogether.

William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 acknowledges the large number of disaster displaced persons identified in recent years as one of the devastating effects of disasters. The Framework underlines, *inter alia*, the need to prepare for “**ensuring rapid and effective response to disasters and related displacement, including access to safe shelter, essential food and non-food relief supplies**” and encourages States to adopt, at national and local levels “**policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities as per national laws and circumstances.**” It also calls for “**transboundary co-operation [...] to build resilience and reduce disaster risk, including [...] displacement risk.**”

The Agenda for Sustainable Development also adopted in 2015 contains a commitment “**to cooperate internationally to ensure [...] the humane treatment**”, *inter alia*, of “**displaced persons**,” and to build the resilience of those in vulnerable situations to climate-related extreme events and other disasters.

9 Migration with Dignity, a Positive Way to Cope with Disasters and Effects of Climate Change.

When living conditions deteriorate, individuals and families commonly use migration as a way to seek alternative opportunities within their country or abroad, rather than waiting until a crisis knocks at their door. Managed properly, migration has the potential for affected people and communities to better cope with recurrent natural hazards, climate change and environmental degradation.

Migration can be a positive adaptation measure and create new livelihood opportunities, support economic development, and build the resilience of communities by allowing migrants to send back remittances and return home with new knowledge and skills.

My grandfather, father and I have worked these lands. But times have changed ... The rain is coming later now, so that we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for 3 to 5 months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income. But leaving my village forever? No. I was raised here and here I will stay.

Miguel, 45, Hueyotlipan, Mexico*

In the Horn of Africa, pastoralists have long used migration as a traditional coping method to access water and grazing land in times of environmental stress. In the Pacific, opportunities for permanent migration are particularly important for communities on low-lying small island States facing the possible loss of their land because of sea level rise and other effects of climate change. Permanent migration allows people who will lose their homes to rising sea levels to decide on their own when the time has come to move abroad, rather than being forced to flee when it is too late to migrate in a regular, planned and dignified manner.

However migration also carries specific risks, in particular for women and children. Migrants might be economically exploited, exposed to dangerous conditions, face discrimination or become victims of violence or being trafficked. Only when their human rights are respected and protected will disaster and climate-change related migration be secure and dignified.

Measures to help facilitate migration with dignity from countries facing natural hazards or climate change impacts include providing training and education to potential migrants in countries of origin, adopting national quotas or seasonal workers programmes in countries of destination, and reviewing existing and developing new bilateral and (sub-) regional migration agreements between interested countries.

Permanent migration: The example of Kiribati's policy on climate change related “**migration with dignity.**” The policy is based on two key components: “**Firstly, opportunities must be created to enable the migration of those who wish to do so now and in the coming years. This will assist in establishing expatriate communities of I-Kiribati, who will be able to absorb and support greater numbers of migrants in the longer term. It will also benefit those who remain by lifting the levels of remittances. Secondly, the levels of qualifications able to be obtained in Kiribati will be raised to those available in countries such as Australia and New Zealand. This will make qualified I-Kiribati more attractive as migrants, but will also improve the standards of services available locally.**” www.climate.gov.ki

Circular or temporary migration: The example of Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme. Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and other islands in the Pacific region are participating in Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme that provides access to work opportunities in the Australian agriculture and accommodation industries for up to nine months every year. “**The Seasonal Worker Programme offers seasonal labour to employers in the agricultural industry, and employers in selected locations in the accommodation industry who can't meet their seasonal labour needs with local jobseekers. [...] In addition to the on-the-job learning seasonal workers undertake under the Programme, they also have the opportunity to participate in valuable basic training opportunities funded by the Australian Government known as add-on skills training.**” www.employment.gov.au

Towards evening, the Pacific island of Tuvalu's landing strip turns into a sports arena, where men and women play volleyball and football, or simply meet for a chat. The airplanes that land here twice a week allow the 3,500 Tuvaluans who live in New Zealand – one third of Tuvalu's entire population – to maintain a connection to their homeland.





Tongan citizens, as well as those from other Pacific islands, are eligible to receive an Australian work visa for six months a year (nine months for people from Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu). Most of them work as fruit pickers and, more recently, in the gardening and tourist industries. Upon return home, most workers invest their earnings just like the Lelenga family (fishmonger Apollo Lelenga) and Vickey Apikotoa in renovating or expanding their home, or buying a new car.



10 Supporting Communities to Relocate to Safer Areas, Before or After a Disaster Strikes.

It was not easy for the village community to relocate. This was especially true for older people that had lived in the village all their life, because the land is part of their culture and identity.

Sailosi Ramatu, Head of the Village of Vunidogoloa, Fiji

The risks posed by disasters, including those caused by the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, have prompted communities and governments to choose planned relocation as an option to help people move and settle on safer lands, both before and after a disaster strikes.

However, because of the many negative effects associated with past relocation processes, planned relocation is generally considered a last resort, only after other options have been reasonably exhausted. Experience shows that planned relocation is more likely to be sustainable if it is undertaken in direct consultation with affected people and host communities, while taking into account cultural values, psychological attachments to the original place of residence and ensuring adequate livelihood opportunities, basic services, and housing in the new location.

In Panama, where the sea level is rising, and in Alaska, where Arctic sea ice and permafrost are melting, indigenous communities are now planning for entire villages to be relocated further inland. In Viet Nam's Mekong Delta, planned relocation serves both developmental and disaster risk reduction purposes.

In the Pacific, Fiji is relocating vulnerable communities as part of its climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. In 2014, the village of Vunidogoloa was the first in Fiji to relocate, with inhabitants moving two kilometres further from the sea after years of coastal erosion and flooding had washed away their homes.

While today planned relocation takes place within countries, the Government of Fiji has offered to receive people from other Pacific nations who ultimately may need to relocate to avoid the effects of severe weather and sea level rise.

Fiji will not turn its back on our neighbors in their hour of need. In a worst-case scenario and if all else fails, you will not be refugees.

Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, President of Fiji to President Anote Tong of Kiribati

11 Addressing the Needs of Internally Displaced Persons in Disaster Contexts.

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which have been recognized by the international community as an “*important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons*,” include those displaced in the context of disasters. At the regional level, **African Union Convention on the Assistance and Protection for Internally Displaced Persons in Africa** (Kampala Convention) provides in Article 5 that “*States Parties shall take measures to protect and assist persons who have been internally displaced due to natural or human made disasters, including climate change.*”

As most disaster displacement takes places within countries, it is particularly important to make sure internally displaced persons (IDPs) receive the assistance and protection they need following disasters. If not, they might be forced to seek assistance and protection beyond borders.

Measures to reduce disaster displacement risk are often the same for both internal and cross-border disaster-displacement. For example, disaster displacement risk mapping, raising awareness on natural hazards through education projects, and developing contingency plans, early warning systems and evacuation routes are equally effective approaches to avoiding and mitigating both internal and cross-border disaster-displacement. Similar approaches may also be used when seeking lasting solutions to disaster displacement.

Today, although more knowledge and data is required to better understand the relationship between internal and cross-border displacement, it has been observed that cross-border movements could potentially be avoided or reduced if IDPs receive adequate protection and assistance following disasters. A lack of durable solutions allowing them to rebuild their lives in a sustainable way either after returning back home, or in another part of their country is one reason why IDPs may subsequently move abroad to seek assistance and protection.

There are more floods now and the river banks are being washed away faster. There is nowhere to go. My land is in the river, I have nothing now.

Intsar Husain, Antar Para, north-western Bangladesh, 2007*

* UNDP (2008) Human Development Report 2007/8.
Fighting climate change: human solidarity in a divided world.



We cannot ignore the issues of migration and need to bring them out from the shadows of the climate change and disaster risk reduction debate. Failing to do so would be like burying our heads in the sand during the high tides.

Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

Settlements, cultivated land and infrastructure along the banks of both large and small rivers, as here at the Jamuna (a main branch of the Brahmaputra in India), regularly suffer from monsoon flooding. Riverbanks are eroded and, simultaneously, the sediment is washed up somewhere else forming new land. Erosion is one of the main reasons many residents migrate.

Conclusion

12 Let's Turn Theory Into Action. Now Is the Time to Address Cross-Border Disaster-Displacement.

The Nansen Initiative consultative process has found that the reality of cross-border disaster-displacement requires strengthened action at all levels, including with the active participation of affected communities. A number of effective practices have been identified to better protect children, women and men displaced across borders in the context of disasters. To support the wider use of such practices, three priority areas for action have been identified:

1

Collecting data and enhancing knowledge on cross-border disaster-displacement.

2

Enhancing the use of humanitarian protection measures for cross-border disaster-displaced persons.

3

Strengthening the management of disaster displacement risk in the country of origin.

At the national level, States should consider establishing designated institutional leadership to bring together different branches of government to coordinate national planning and response efforts for cross-border disaster-displacement. Involving local authorities, affected communities, indigenous peoples, women, youth, civil society organizations and academia in every step will be key in the implementation of activities.

At the regional level, recognizing that challenges vary from region to region and require specific appropriate responses, the roles of regional and sub-regional organizations are critical for developing integrated responses. This includes, for example, the African Union and the African regional economic communities, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Central American integration mechanisms, and other consultative processes.

Last, but not least, international organizations and agencies at the global level addressing issues as diverse as humanitarian action, human rights protection, migration management, refugee protection, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and development can provide technical advice as well as capacity building and operational support. They are already active in many relevant areas but should find ways to better cooperate and be more effective on the cross-cutting challenge of disaster displacement.

The Nansen Initiative's Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Disaster-Displaced Persons strives to inspire all actors to act now on behalf of families and communities displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change.

Cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change is a serious issue that cannot be ignored. There is a need for institutions, programmes and policies that can effectively protect the interests and rights of displaced people so that they can move in safety, both internally and across borders, with full respect of their human rights.

Judi W. Wakhungu, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Government of Kenya

Key Facts & Figures About the Nansen Initiative Process

We must think, make policies and act for the interest of the displaced, they have their rights.

Musa Ecweru Francis, Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees, Government of Uganda



The Nansen Initiative is a state-led initiative chaired by **Norway** and **Switzerland**.



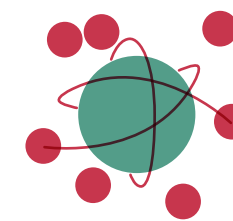
The Steering Group has 7 other members: **Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Kenya, Mexico** and the **Philippines**.



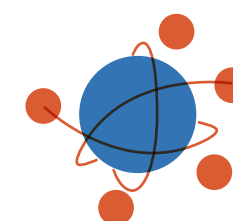
More than **40** countries are part of the Nansen Initiative Group of **Friends** in Geneva, Switzerland.



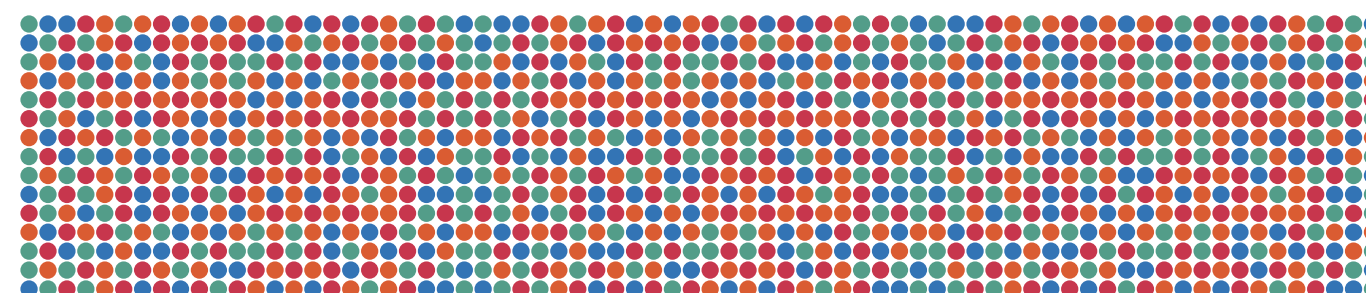
There are **80** Nansen Initiative **Consultative Committee Members**, among them researchers, NGOs and international and regional organizations from all **5** continents.



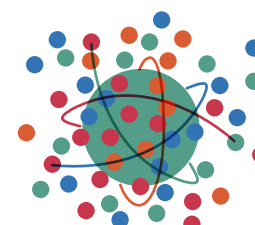
7 Regional Intergovernmental Consultations have been organized around the world.



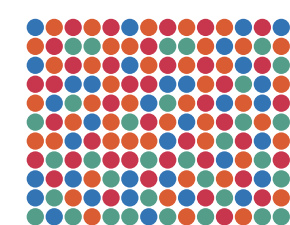
5 Regional Civil Society Meetings have been organised around the world.



Close to **1,000 participants** have participated in the 12 consultations organized by the Nansen Initiative.



More than **100 countries** and more than **10 regional organizations** have been consulted across **5 continents** through the consultations.

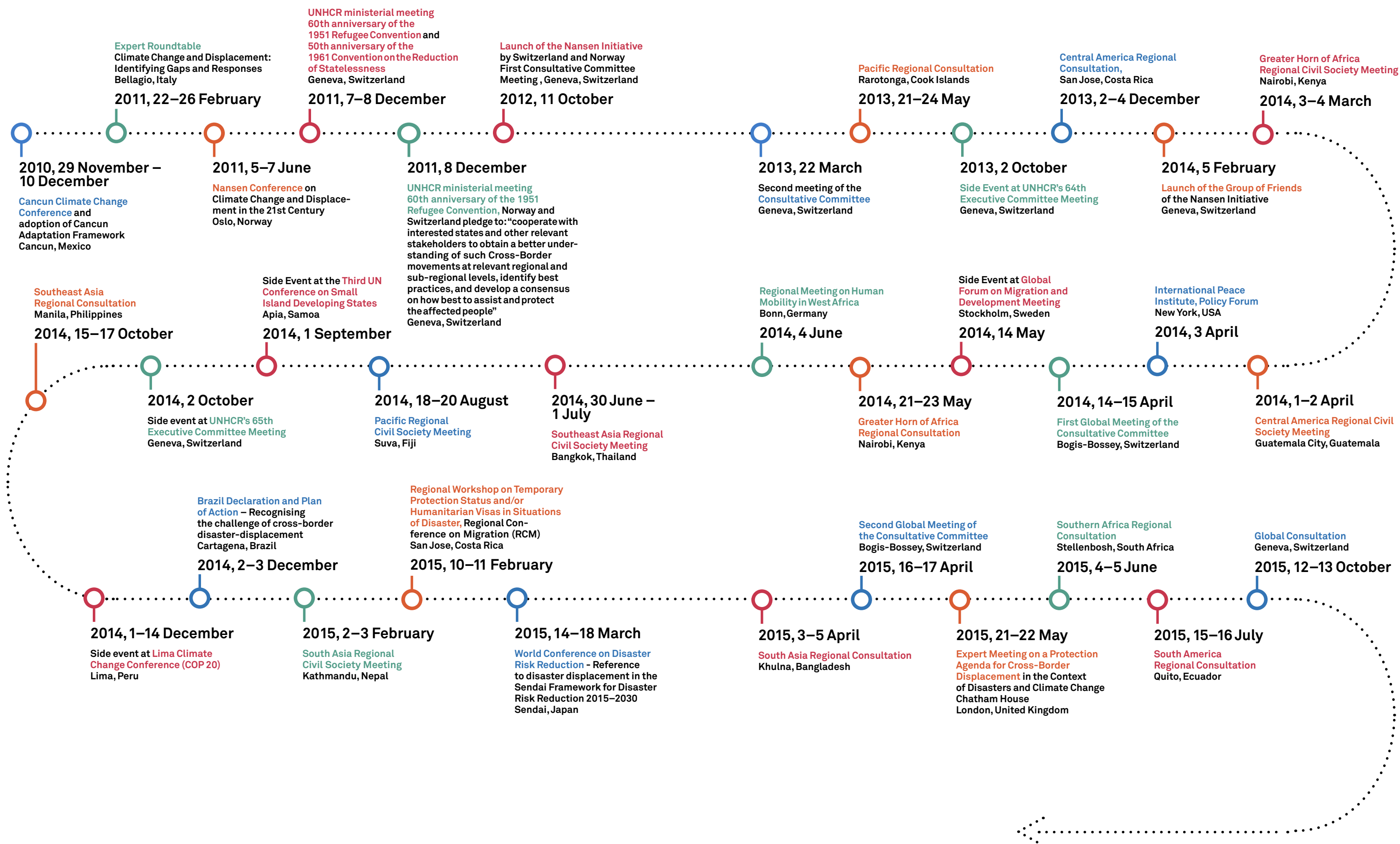


More than **150 NGOs** and **15 United Nations Agencies** have participated in the consultations.



More than **30 academic institutions** have engaged in the consultative process.

The Nansen Initiative Timeline



Nansen Initiative Global Consultation: Statement

We, Ministers and representatives from 110 delegations, met in Geneva on 12 and 13 October 2015 for a Global Consultation to take stock of, and discuss, the findings of the Nansen Initiative, to identify future action, and to strengthen our efforts to prevent and address cross-border disaster-displacement.

Disaster displacement is one of the main humanitarian challenges of our time, affecting tens of millions of people every year. Sudden and slow-onset disasters and climate events have devastating impacts on people's lives and livelihoods, communities and socio-economic conditions. Climate change, in combination with other factors, is projected to increase displacement in the future. Many States have developed profound knowledge in addressing displacement, migration and planned relocation in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change. Around a quarter of all States have received, or refrained from returning, persons in the aftermath of disasters. At the same time, significant normative, institutional and operational gaps regarding cross-border disaster-displacement leave people vulnerable, particularly women and children. A holistic approach going beyond humanitarian responses is required, including efforts to address displacement and its root causes.

The governments of Norway and Switzerland, building on the 2010 UNFCCC Cancún Adaptation Framework and the 2011 Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century, pledged at the UNHCR Ministerial Conference in December 2011 to address the need for a more coherent and consistent approach to the protection of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change. This was the origin of the Nansen Initiative, a bottom-up, state-led consultative process carried out over the past three years.

The "Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change" (Agenda), a non-binding text, results from this process, marking the fulfilment of the Swiss-Norwegian pledge and the end of the Nansen Initiative in its current form. We thank the Co-Chairs, the Envoy, the Steering Group, the Group of Friends, the Consultative Committee and key international and regional organizations and NGOs for their valuable support. Recognizing that States have the primary responsibility to prevent and respond to disaster displacement, we strive to

strengthen our efforts for more effective action to prevent and address cross-border disaster-displacement at all levels, bringing together expertise from the fields of humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management, disaster risk reduction, climate change, and development and other international cooperation.

We endorse the Agenda as a guiding document to better conceptualize cross-border disaster-displacement. It compiles and analyzes key principles and illustrative examples of effective State practices from around the world, and provides a toolbox of policy options for action. It also highlights regional diversity, the need for important contributions by regional and sub-regional organizations, the international community, and development partners, and the relevant role of affected populations, local communities, including where relevant ethnic groups, and civil society.

The Agenda identifies three priority areas for action: collecting data and enhancing knowledge; enhancing the use of humanitarian protection measures for cross-border disaster-displaced persons; and strengthening the management of disaster displacement risk in the country of origin. The latter may entail, as relevant, integrating human mobility within disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies; facilitating migration with dignity as a potentially positive way to cope with natural hazards and adverse effects of climate change; improving the use of planned relocation; and ensuring that the needs of internally displaced persons in disaster situations are specifically addressed. We recognize these as relevant suggestions, and will promote and apply, as appropriate, the findings of the Agenda nationally as well as in regional and international fora and processes.

We welcome the creation of a group of States and other key stakeholders in Geneva as a forum for dialogue to promote the Agenda at the multilateral level, alongside an institutional arrangement strengthening the coordination and cooperation between UNHCR, IOM and other relevant organizations. This combined approach of continued state-led leadership with operational implementation, including at the regional level and with the expertise of international agencies, aims at an appropriate follow-up to the Agenda and at furthering the momentum of the Global Consultation.

Geneva, 13 October 2015

Pero lo más importante, es que la adopción de la agenda implica un terreno común sobre principios y elementos de protección de las personas desplazadas por desastres.

Manuel González Sanz, Foreign Minister of Costa Rica during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

Instancias como la Iniciativa Nansen son fundamentales para realizar un balance e identificar acciones que fortalezcan nuestras labores preventivas de desplazamientos transfronterizos a causa de desastres.

Ignacio Llanos, Director of Multilateral Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile, during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

The Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change was endorsed by 110 governmental delegations during a global intergovernmental consultation on 12–13 October 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland that gathered a total of 361 participants representing governments, international organizations, aca-

demie institutions and civil society. The Agenda consolidates the outcomes of a series of regional intergovernmental consultations and civil society meetings convened by the Nansen Initiative in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific over the course of 2013–2015, as well as research commissioned by the Nansen Initiative.



C'est un grand honneur pour moi et pour mon pays, le Burundi d'avoir cette belle opportunité pour exprimer ma grande satisfaction à l'égard de l'initiative Nansen avec son agenda de protection des déplacés des catastrophes avec une participation globale et inclusive alors que les efforts étaient jusqu'ici localement fournis au cours de telles situations.

Hakizimana Venant, Director of Planning Secure Operations in General Direction of Civil Protection of Public Security Ministry, Burundi, during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

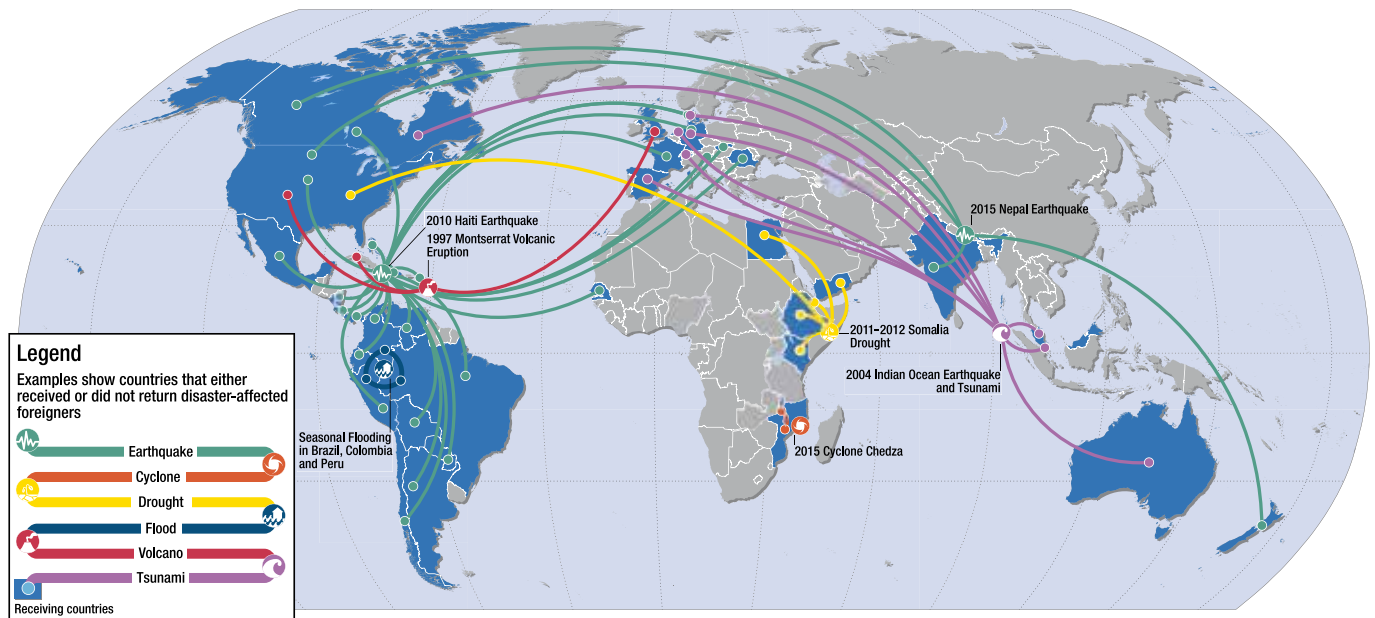
The protection agenda for climate displacement that we have before us today provides us with critical guidelines on how to deal with displacement issues.

Abul Hassan Mahmood, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

We look forward to continuing work domestically, and with regional and global partners to make links across environmental, migration, humanitarian, security, and development sectors, to achieve workable, flexible and differentiated responses to this challenge. We welcome the innovative and targeted responses uncovered through the regional consultations, which have been harnessed in the Agenda and its Annexes.

Richard Johnson, Assistant Secretary, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Australia, during the Nansen Initiative Global Consultation.

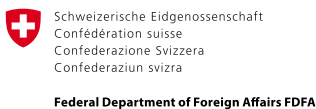
Examples of Cross-Border Disaster-Displacement



We would like to thank Lars Müller Publishers for designing, publishing and printing this publication. We would also like to thank Andri Pol for contributing his photographs, as well as the numerous people and organizations that generously helped facilitate Pol's visits in Australia, Bangladesh, Haiti, India, Fiji, Kenya, Kiribati, Nepal, New Zealand, Panama, Uganda, Tuvalu, and Tonga. Finally, we would like to thank the individual people who agreed to share their experiences and be photographed for this project.

This publication is part of a longer-term project exploring disasters and displacement, with the ultimate objective of publishing a visual reader book. Partners, institutional or individual interested in this project, may contact Lars Müller Publishers at lars@lars-muller.ch

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