

## THE REALITIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED HUMAN MOBILITY TO BE ADDRESSED IN PARIS



### THE CHALLENGE: CLIMATE-RELATED HUMAN MOBILITY IS REAL

Disaster displacement, including displacement linked to the adverse effects of climate change, is a global reality today that keeps growing in complexity and proportion.

Since 2008, an average of one person per second has been displaced by sudden-onset disasters, most of them weather- and climate-related. While the risk of such displacement is estimated to have doubled over the past 40 years, this annual average of 26.4 million people does not include those who moved because of slow-onset impacts of climate change. The global number of people displaced by slow-onset hazards like drought and rising sea levels can only be estimated. For example, in 2011 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, famine, and instability within Somalia. Such large-scale displacements has a devastating effect on families and communities.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of disasters, raise sea levels, and change rainfall variability, all of which threatening human settlements, infrastructure, natural resources and associated livelihoods. Such conditions are likely to prompt higher levels of displacement worldwide.

### THE RESPONSE: RECOGNIZING HUMAN MOBILITY IN PARIS

In December 2010, the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed upon the Cancun Adaptation Framework which introduced paragraph 14(f), recognizing that climate-induced human mobility is an adaptation challenge posed by climate change and invited Parties in (paragraph 14(f)):

“to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework [...] by undertaking inter alia, the following: [...] Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at national, regional and international levels.”

Similarly, the 2012 Doha decision on loss and damage (3/CP.18) encouraged work to enhance understanding of how impacts of climate change are affecting “patterns of migration, displacement and human mobility.”

Thus, Parties have already recognized that climate change-related displacement and other forms of human mobility are both a climate change adaptation issue and a problem potentially leading to loss and damage.

This means that 1) preventing displacement and responding to displacement where it occurs, 2) facilitating migration as a way to cope with adverse impacts of climate change and 3) undertaking planned relocation of people away from areas at risk when necessary must all remain priorities within climate change policies. It is therefore imperative to address human mobility in the Paris climate change agreements and decisions.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR CONSULTATIONS

As of September 2015, 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. Participants have consistently underscored the need for and importance of integrating human mobility considerations into climate change adaptation policies.

The outcomes of the Regional Consultations have also emphasized that while preparing for and responding to displacement when it occurs is crucial, States and regional organizations have policy options within the context of climate change adaption planning processes that can be implemented before displacement becomes a reality. For instance, adaptation measures can contribute to preventing or mitigating displacement, reducing vulnerability, and strengthening the resilience of communities at risk of displacement, as well as potential host communities.

This section will highlight a few key recommendations from Nansen Initiative Regional Consultations.



# 26.4 million people

Displaced by disasters on average per year since 2008

THE EQUIVALENT OF ONE PERSON FORCED TO FLEE EVERY SECOND

# 7 out of the 10

nations facing the greatest risk from climate change and natural hazards globally are in Asia and the Pacific, and 3 of these are small Pacific island states.





## PACIFIC – MAY 2013

- 1 Integrate voluntary migration, forced displacement, and planned relocation within national laws and policies, such as National Adaptation Plans, Joint National Action Plans, and National Disaster Management Plans.
- 2 Continue to strengthen and deepen education, training and upskilling of Pacific Islanders, including through qualification and accreditation alignment, so that they can migrate with dignity if they choose to do so.
- 3 Take measures such as land audits, demarcation of uncontested boundaries and community land mapping to facilitate the identification of land when people need to be temporarily or permanently moved, within their own country or abroad.

## GREATER HORN OF AFRICA – MAY 2014

- 1 Recognize that preventing and mitigating the impact of all forms of displacement in disaster contexts is a development issue that should be addressed within national development plans to strengthen the resilience of communities through measures such as investing in infrastructure, livelihoods, education, and health care.
- 2 Consider including the concept of migration as adaptation and the displacement of pastoralists across international borders within the draft The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Transhumance Protocol currently under development.
- 3 Acknowledge the potential of helping families and communities adapt to environmental stress if some of their members are allowed to migrate abroad, send back remittances, and return with newly acquired skills to their areas of origin.

## CENTRAL AMERICA – DECEMBER 2013

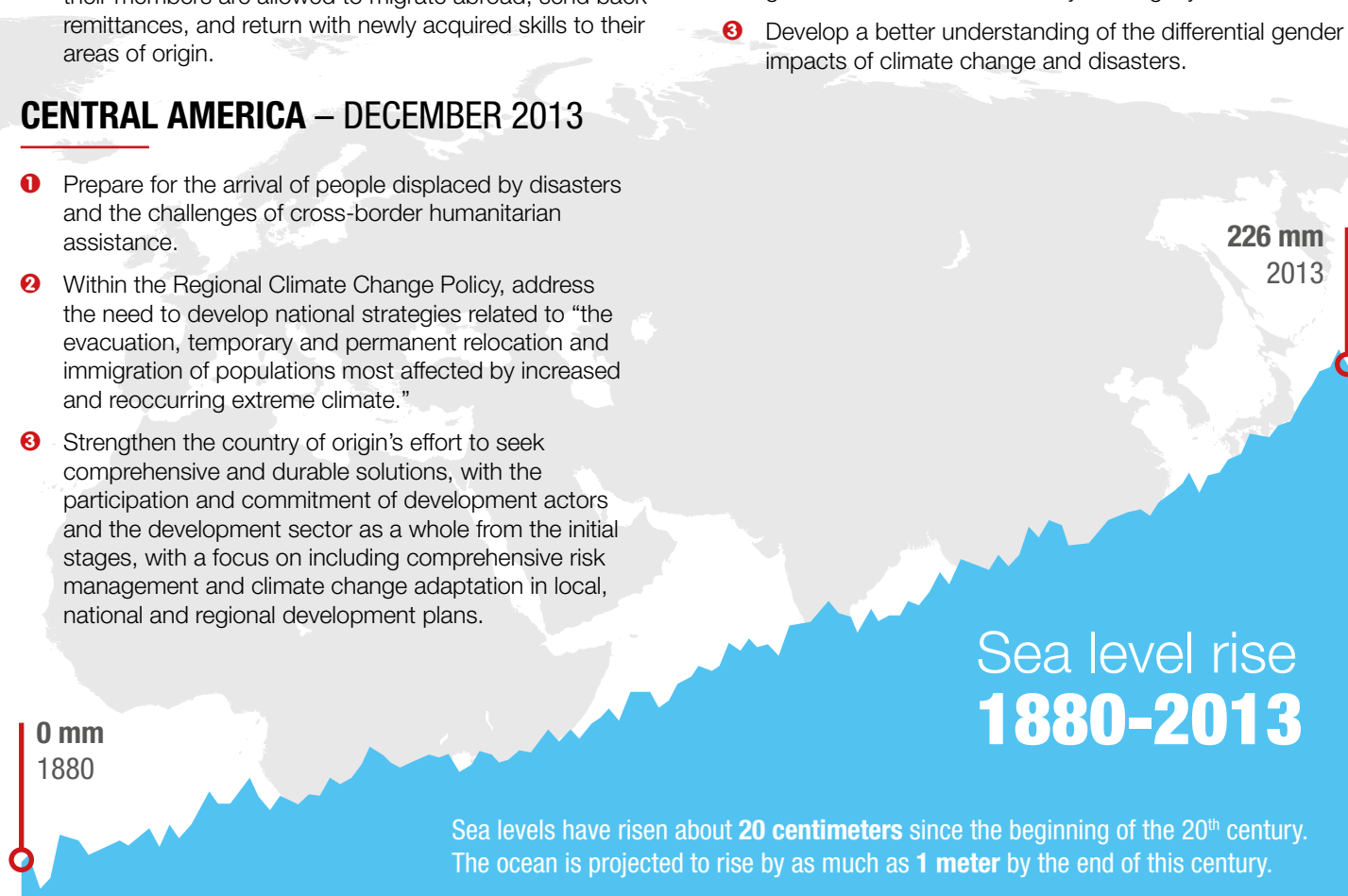
- 1 Prepare for the arrival of people displaced by disasters and the challenges of cross-border humanitarian assistance.
- 2 Within the Regional Climate Change Policy, address the need to develop national strategies related to “the evacuation, temporary and permanent relocation and immigration of populations most affected by increased and reoccurring extreme climate.”
- 3 Strengthen the country of origin’s effort to seek comprehensive and durable solutions, with the participation and commitment of development actors and the development sector as a whole from the initial stages, with a focus on including comprehensive risk management and climate change adaptation in local, national and regional development plans.

## SOUTH ASIA – APRIL 2015

- 1 Prepare for the specific human mobility scenarios facing Small Island Developing States and climate vulnerable countries in the context of disasters and climate change, including challenges related to legal status, identity and culture.
- 2 Develop policies at all levels on migration as a form of adaptation to climate change and disasters, recognizing that the poorest and most vulnerable may need additional assistance to make migration a positive adaptation strategy.
- 3 Enhance data collection on disaster-related human mobility, and expand upon current research and knowledge to improve understanding on the relationship between climate change, disasters, and human mobility, including respective displacement risks, to inform relevant policies.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA – OCTOBER 2014

- 1 Mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies, including with regard to the prevention of displacement, the facilitation of migration as adaptation, and planned relocation processes, into national and local social, economic and development sectors and plans in order to strengthen resilience.
- 2 Recognize the relevance of migration as a strategy for individuals and households to adapt to the challenges of climate change and slow- as well as sudden-onset disasters, and the need to train and prepare potential migrants so that they can participate in regional and global labour markets in safety and dignity.
- 3 Develop a better understanding of the differential gender impacts of climate change and disasters.





## OUR PERSPECTIVE: COMMITTING TO ACTION

Based on the conclusions of the Nansen Initiative consultative process to date on disaster displacement, including displacement linked to the adverse effects of climate change, the following considerations should inform negotiations on the Agreement and Decisions to be adopted at the **United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris**:

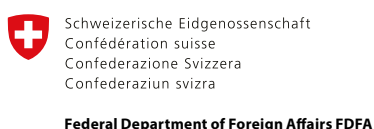
- **Climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation are already a reality** in many parts of the world.
- **Unless strong and effective mitigation actions start today, the adverse impact of climate change on human mobility will be more serious.** Increasing sea level rise affecting low lying islands and vulnerable coastlines, as well as more droughts and melting glaciers in other parts of the world, will reduce the habitability of land and potentially force people to leave their homes. Devastating flooding and tropical storms that displace large numbers of people are also likely to increase in number and severity unless robust mitigation measures are taken now.
- **Climate change adaptation measures can help people to:**
  - **Stay and thus avoid displacement by building up the resilience of individuals and communities living in areas at risk of weather- and climate-related hazards**, for instance by making infrastructure and human settlements more climate-resilient or supporting livelihood diversification projects that help people adapt to environmental changes;
  - **Migrate with dignity out of hazardous areas or relocate to safer places in planned ways.** Depending on the situation, temporary, circular, and in extreme cases permanent migration may allow people to cope with adverse effects of climate change, but such migration has to be managed, regular and take place in ways that respect the rights of migrants. Planned relocation may also allow people to move before disaster strikes;
  - **Address loss and damage experienced when displacement occurs**, in particular by finding solutions that allow displaced people to rebuild their lives in sustainable ways.
- **Building on the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework and the 2012 Doha decision on loss and damage** that recognize climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation as a highly relevant issue, the Paris Climate Change Conference should strive to integrate human mobility into the forthcoming outcomes of the conference based on the following understandings:
  - The effects of climate change on human mobility are among the most difficult challenges associated with global warming. **Human mobility thus needs to be recognized as a priority** within climate change policies for years to come and explicitly addressed;
  - Displacement in the context of climate change can, to some extent, be prevented or at least reduced by **taking robust mitigation and adaptation measures**. Without such measures, people living in Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, who contributed the least to global warming, will suffer the most from displacement;
  - To adequately address climate change-related human mobility, it is necessary that affected States, as relevant, undertake their own efforts to enhance preparedness to address climate change-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation by **integrating human mobility issues into regional, national and local adaptation** efforts, and that **International cooperation** in these efforts is enhanced.

## ABOUT THE NANSEN INITIATIVE

Every year around the world, millions of people are forced to leave their homes because of 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 movements are 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 Switzerland and Norway, the Nansen Initiative is a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on the development of a Protection Agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change.



With the support of:



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“Looking at the magnitude of climate change-related displacement and migration, and the increasing need to relocate people away from eroding coastlines, it is imperative that Parties address displacement, migration and planned relocation in the Paris agreement and decision in line with the 2010 Cancun Agreement on adaptation and the 2012 Doha decision on loss and damage.”

**Prof. Walter Kaelin**, Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative

**THE  
NANSEN  
INITIATIVE**  
DISASTER-INDUCED CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

Nansen Initiative Secretariat  
International Environment House 2  
7-9, Chemin de Balexert  
1219 Châtelaine, Geneva  
Switzerland

Source: IDMC,  
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