



## POLICY BRIEF: DISPLACEMENT AT COP 22

*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)  
22nd Conference of Parties (COP 22), Marrakesh, Morocco*

### DISPLACEMENT RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE

*Climate change is the defining challenge of our times: a challenge which interacts with and reinforces the other global megatrends such as population growth, urbanization, and growing food, water and energy insecurity. It is a challenge which is adding to the scale and complexity of human displacement; and a challenge that has important implications for the maintenance of international peace and security.*<sup>1</sup>

Disasters linked to natural hazards, including the adverse impacts of climate change, are drivers of contemporary displacement. Between 2008 and 2015 more than 203.4 million people were displaced by disasters.<sup>2</sup> The likelihood of being displaced by disasters has doubled since the 1970s. Looking to the future, there is high agreement among scientists that the effects of climate change, in combination with other factors, will increase the displacement of people.<sup>3</sup>



Sudanese refugees from the Darfur region in Bahai. The first rain of the season flooded the temporary shelters of refugees camped in a waddi running along the Chad-Sudan border. All were forced to find new shelter. July 15, 2004. UNHCR / H. Caux

<sup>1</sup> António Guterres, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in an address to the UN Security Council, 23 November 2011, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ee21edc9.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5\\_SYR\\_FINAL\\_SPM.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf).

## HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT

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On 12 December 2015, after eight years of negotiations, 195 countries adopted the legally binding Paris Agreement at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It will enter into force on 4 November 2016.

The Paris Agreement includes three important elements for human mobility issues.

1. The Agreement's Preamble recognizes that climate change is a common concern of humankind and includes a reference to migrants, asking Parties to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations towards migrants, among others, when taking actions to address climate change.
2. The Paris Agreement contains many references to the protection of people, the resilience of communities and the importance of livelihoods. These are essential entry points for addressing environmentally-linked root causes of forced displacement such as access to water, food, energy, and the need for livelihood opportunities to enable people to remain where they live.
3. Finally, the Paris Agreement requests the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) to establish a task force on displacement. Paragraph 50 of the Decision Text requests that "the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism to establish, according to its procedures and mandate, a task force to complement, draw upon the work of and involve, as appropriate, existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention including the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, as well as relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention, to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change;" This is also an acknowledgment of the dangers of displacement and a welcome recognition of climate change as a factor of displacement.

## UNHCR RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMITMENTS FOR COP22

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### WARSAW INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM (WIM) TASK FORCE ON DISPLACEMENT

- Sufficient resources are needed for the successful and timely implementation of the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) Task Force on displacement.
- UNHCR encourages the use of terminology from Cancun Adaptation Framework Paragraph 14f: displacement, migration and planned relocation, under the umbrella term human mobility.
- UNHCR encourages the mainstreaming of human mobility in their planning tools, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- UNHCR encourage the Task Force to focus on recommendations directly relevant to the UNFCCC in order to avoid duplication with other ongoing efforts.

### PREAMBLE REFERENCE TO 'MIGRANTS'

- While it is important to bear in mind the significant distinction between migrants on the one hand and refugees on the other,<sup>4</sup> the interpretation of the Preamble Reference to migrants should extend to the most vulnerable people on the move, including people forcibly displaced by the effects of climate change. This should also extend to all internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers situated in climate change hotspots who are doubly affected by conflicts and climate impacts.

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<sup>4</sup> See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugees and migrants: frequently asked questions", 15 March 2015. Available from [www.unhcr.org/print/56e95c676.html](http://www.unhcr.org/print/56e95c676.html).

## OTHER MATTERS

- UNHCR will remain a partner organization to the Nairobi Work Programme, including for supporting work on human settlements that is core to the climate displacement issue.
- UNHCR encourages the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to take into consideration measures to avert and minimize climate displacement in all their programmes and operations, and calls for more adaptation funding to minimize the risk of forced climate displacement.
- UNHCR encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to work with UNHCR and other relevant organizations to assess how different temperature scenarios would lead to displacement of populations, as part of IPCC's advice to inform the Global Stocktake.
- UNHCR encourages the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to work closely with the Task Force on displacement to contribute to and implement relevant recommendations to support LDCs in averting, minimizing and addressing displacement.
- National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are a useful planning tool for Parties to prevent and minimize displacement. UNHCR is committed to provide technical support to Parties when formulating and implementing their NAPs for enhancing resilience of populations and moving them out of harm's way before they are forcibly displaced.
- UNHCR encourages the development of trainings and capacity building in developing countries to avert, minimize and address displacement in context of climate change.

## UNHCR SIDE EVENTS AT COP22

Name	Organizer	Date and Time	Location
Climate Displacement: protection challenges, the platform on Disaster Displacement	UNHCR PDD	Wednesday November 9 15:00-14:30	GREEN ZONE Room: Sebou
One UN side Event - Human Mobility and Climate Change	UNHCR (organizer) Partners: IOM, UNU, UN Women, PDD, UNICEF	Thursday November 10 13:15—14:45	BLUE ZONE Room: Mediterranean

## ROLE OF UNHCR IN THE UNFCCC PROCESS

From 2008, UNHCR has provided technical support to UNFCCC Parties on human mobility:

- Starting in 2008, UNHCR was a member of the IASC Task Force on Climate Change special sub-group on 'migration, displacement, and climate change'. This group provided collective submissions to annual Conferences of Parties to UNFCCC (COPs), which contributed to paragraph 14 of Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010.
- Starting in 2013, UNHCR coordinated the 'Advisory Group on Human Mobility and Climate Change' which provided joint submissions on displacement, migration and planned relocation, organized side events, joint exhibits, bilateral meetings, press briefings on the road to Paris COP 21, which contributed to the creation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) Task Force on Climate Displacement.
- UNHCR has also been actively involved in the work of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) working group on climate change (WGCC).

UNHCR remains committed to continue providing technical support to Parties in implementing the Paris Agreement.

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