

Addressing Disaster Displacement & Climate Change: Opportunities in Partnership

Concept Note

Side Event at the 68th session of the Executive Committee

4 October 2017, 9-10h00

Palais des Nations, Room XII

Co-organised by Germany, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and UNHCR

Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change are among the biggest global challenges that States and the humanitarian system face in the 21st century. Every year, millions of people are forced to leave their homes. Floods, tropical storms, droughts, earthquakes and other natural hazards turn into disasters and overwhelm local resilience and coping capacities. UNHCR's strategic directions (2017-2021) indicate clear commitments in this regard both to respond and to protect in disaster and climate change contexts.

Germany, PDD and UNHCR plan to hold a side event at the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's programme (ExCom) in 2017 on this theme. It will provide an opportunity for the international community to discuss challenges and opportunities in relation to the ways in which governments, working with UNHCR and other partners, have sought to avert, reduce or address displacement in context of disasters and climate change. This will be an opportunity for sharing best practices in different regions, as well as various types of engagement ranging from operational response to normative and policy development.

The panel will be moderated by Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker Türk.

Panelists may include representatives from the following States:

- The Government of Germany (Ambassador Antje Leendertse), speaking on *progress achieved in the context of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)*. Germany will speak from its perspective as chair of the Steering Group of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. This could be an opportunity for Germany to take stock on progress made by the PDD, including on UNHCR support for the coordination unit and implementation of activities in the PDD workplan.
- Government of Costa Rica (name tbc) on *advancing normative and legal solutions for protection*. Drawing on recent bi-national workshop and simulation exercise with Panama, supported by UNHCR, Costa Rica could speak to the importance of enhancing use of best practices and developing guidance, including Standard Operating Procedures for competent authorities, for collaboration in protection of cross-border disaster displaced persons.
- Fiji (Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan) on *policy coherence* – As the Chair of COP23 presidency, Fiji could speak to the importance of UNHCR's role in promoting policy coherence with UNFCCC negotiations, and specifically in support of the Task Force on Displacement. Furthermore, as the government is currently developing a national policy on planned relocation, could speak to the importance of the UNHCR, Brookings and Georgetown Guidance on planned relocation, as well as the UNHCR Georgetown and IOM operational toolkit to support states in undertaking relocations from a consultative and human rights based approach.

- Envoy of the Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (Professor Walter Kälin) on *ways forward*. He will speak about opportunities for policy and normative development at national and regional level in addressing the legal gap for persons who have moved across international borders in disaster contexts. He will also hint at openings for strengthening the protection of disaster displaced persons in the follow-up to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and in the development of the two Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees.

Background documents:

- Platform on Disaster Displacement Fact Sheet (2017)
- Platform on Disaster Displacement Leaflet (2017)
- Professors Guy S. Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam, UNHCR AND CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTERS, AND DISPLACEMENT (2017)
- UNHCR, Quick Guide: Climate Change and Disaster Displacement (2017)
- UNHCR, Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's role (2017)
- UNHCR, Key concepts Climate Change and Disaster Displacement (2017)
- UNHCR, Report of June 2017 UNHCR NGO Consultations Event on Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities in Global Compacts (2017)
- UNHCR, Georgetown, IOM, A toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change (2017)
- UNHCR, Georgetown, Brookings, Guidance on planned relocation in the context of disaster and climate change (2015)
- Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda (2015)