



PDD Fact Sheet

About 18.8 million people have been displaced in the context of disasters in 2017. This number is likely to increase in the coming years due to the adverse effects of climate change. **Disaster displacement**, both **internally and across borders**, is one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of the 21st century. Governments have the responsibility to protect and assist those who are internally displaced by disasters. But **people who are forced to cross a border in the context of a disaster and the effects of climate change have limited protection** when they arrive in another country.

The 1951 Refugee Convention **does not recognize disasters as a ground for refugee status**. At the international level, cross-border disaster-displaced persons are protected by human rights but refugee law only applies in certain instances. **Regional or national laws** as well as **effective practices** may grant additional protection. In recent decades, at least 50 countries have received or refrained from returning persons from disaster-affected countries.

The **Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)** proposes an approach to better protect disaster-displaced persons building on these **effective practices and processes at the national and regional level**. In recognition of the **legal gap at the international level**, in December 2011, Switzerland and Norway pledged at a UNHCR Ministerial Meeting to build consensus on key principles and elements on **how to better protect persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change**. In October 2015, more than 100 governments endorsed the outcome of the **Nansen Initiative**, the Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change ("**Protection Agenda**") at a Global Consultation in Geneva.

At the occasion of the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, **Germany launched the PDD** to follow up on the Nansen Initiative and support states in implementing the Protection Agenda. Germany had the **Chairmanship** of the Steering Group from July 2016 until December 2017. In January 2018, **Bangladesh took over as Chair, with France acting as Vice-Chair** until June 2019. It will then be France's turn to assume the Chairmanship with a new Vice-Chair. **Prof. Walter Kaelin**, former Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative serves as Envoy of the Chair. The members of the **PDD Steering Group** are: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Fiji, France, Germany, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Senegal, Switzerland and the European Union.

IOM and UNHCR are standing invitees of the Steering Group and key implementing partners of PDD, together with more than 100 members of the **PDD Advisory Committee**, including experts of international and regional organizations, research institutions, academia, private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders from the fields of **humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management, refugee protection, disaster risk reduction, climate change action and development**.



A Coordination Unit based in Geneva (hosted by UNOPS and funded by Germany) supports the implementation of its 2016 – 2019 Strategic Framework and Workplan with the following **four Strategic Priorities**:

- 1) Address **knowledge and data gaps**;
- 2) Enhance the use of identified effective practices and strengthen cooperation among relevant actors to **prevent**, when possible, to **reduce and to address cross-border displacement** at the national, regional and international levels;
- 3) Promote **policy coherence and mainstreaming of human mobility challenges** in, and across, relevant policy and action areas;
- 4) Promote **policy and normative development** in gap areas.

Steering Group Members act as **regional and thematic champions** to ensure disaster displacement is considered in **relevant policy processes and events**. In 2017/18, these include the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the Global Platform for DRR, the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Task Force on Displacement as well as ongoing processes of IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNEP, OHCHR, OCHA, ILO, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and others.

Addressing the issue of **cross-border disaster-displacement** at the international policy level is **challenging** because:

- **Data and knowledge are insufficient**: It is challenging to obtain data on displacement caused by sudden-onset events; estimating the numbers of those displaced due to the adverse effects of climate change is even harder to measure.
- **Terminology** is unclear: Different labels are used to refer to different types of human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change (e.g. „environmental migrants“, „climate refugees“); there is no agreement on criteria to characterize mobility as „forced“.
- Disaster Displacement is **cross-cutting** and requires coordination among **different International Organizations, policy areas and ministries**: foreign policy, domestic affairs, human rights, development, DRR, climate change action, migration management, refugee protection, etc.

Key messages of the PDD:

- 1) There is a **legal gap** at the international level: **better protection for cross-border disaster-displaced people** is urgently needed;
- 2) Ongoing investments in **preparedness, prevention, risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable development and resilience** build the basis for efforts to reduce displacement risks, and they need to include human mobility considerations;
- 3) Where displacement cannot be avoided, **States need to prepare for cross-border displacement of persons**, building on existing effective practices at the national and regional levels including **humanitarian protection measures** such as temporary protection status, humanitarian visa and free movement of persons schemes, etc. In the absence of an international legal framework, these practices need to be improved and shared.