



PLATFORM
ON DISASTER
DISPLACEMENT
FOLLOW-UP TO THE NANSEN INITIATIVE



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Annual Thematic Meeting of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) Striving together for addressing displacement due to slow and sudden-onset disasters

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DRAFT BACKGROUND PAPER¹

I. Introduction

Displacement due to slow and sudden-onset disasters has been recognized as one of the main humanitarian challenges of the 21st century.² Although this is not a new phenomenon, sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, have received increased attention in recent decades as drivers of human mobility, including displacement, migration and planned relocation. The urgency of addressing climate change and the ever-more visible effects it has on people's lives fueled increased attention in the topic at national, regional and international levels.

South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific³ are three of the most exposed sub-regions in the world to natural hazards, environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change. When the resilience of people and their communities to withstand such phenomena is not sufficient, people may move elsewhere to seek assistance, protection, safety, new settlements and livelihoods. The majority of these people move within their countries, with only some crossing borders and when doing so, mostly staying within the region.⁴

Human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change is already a reality in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. In 2017 alone, some 7 million people were forced to leave their homes due to sudden-onset disasters in these sub-regions.⁵ However, this figure does not

¹ This Background Paper has been drafted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division and the Coordination Unit of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD).

² Nansen Initiative (2015). *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change Volume I*, p.6. Nansen Initiative, Geneva. Available from http://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN_Protection_Agenda_Volume_I_low_res.pdf.

³ For the purposes of this paper, the South Asia Region consists of the Member States to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The Southeast Asia Region consists of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States: Brunei, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam. The Pacific Region consists of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Member Countries: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

⁴ Ionesco, D., D. Mokhnacheva and F. Gemenne (2017). *The Atlas of Environmental Migration*, p.16. Routledge, London and New York. Available from www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/atlas-environmental-migration.

⁵ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2018). *Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2018*. Available from: www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/.

represent the whole picture. Estimates on the number of people currently moving in the context of slow-onset events and processes, including those linked to climate change, are scarce and often only that, estimates. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 1.5°C Report warns that migration and displacement will increase due to sea level rise, temperature increase and drought, unless we limit the greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

There are different actors addressing human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change, including States, United Nations (UN) agencies, civil society, academia and people on the move themselves. Policy and operational responses are being implemented at local, national, regional and global levels to address human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change.

The Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and host Government of this meeting, Bangladesh, is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the adverse effects of climate change, due to its geographical position, population density and development.⁷ The World Bank projects that, without concrete climate and development action, by 2050, Bangladesh may have more “climate migrants” than any other type of internal migrants.⁸

At the national and local levels, the Government has invested significantly in mitigating and adapting to climate change and is also working to assist those moving due to hazards such as floods, coastal erosion and sea-level rise.⁹ Bangladesh has also put this issue on the agenda in several regional fora, such as the Colombo Process and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) as well as in cross-regional processes, including the Delta Coalition, Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). At the global level, the Government of Bangladesh is a champion on the issue of human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change, as demonstrated by their engagement in the UN Human Rights Council,¹⁰ in the process towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM),¹¹ in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and in the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

The Platform on Disaster Displacement is a State-led initiative aiming to strengthen the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters, including those linked to the adverse effects of climate change, and to prevent and reduce disaster displacement risks. PDD was launched in 2016 by

⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2018). *Global Warming of 1.5 °C: An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*. Chapter 3, p.244-245. [V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, H. O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J. B. R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M. I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, T. Waterfield (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva. Available from www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.

⁷ IOM (2016), *Assessing the Climate Change Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia*. IOM, Bangladesh. p. 42. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/assessing-climate-change-migration-nexus-south-asia>.

⁸ Rigaud, K.K., A. de Sherbinin, B. Jones, J. Bergmann, V. Clement, K. Ober, J. Schewe, S. Adamo, B. McCusker, S. Heuser, A. Midgley (2018). *Groundswell Report: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, Washington. Available from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461>.

⁹ IOM (2016), p.54.

¹⁰ At the 35th Session of the Human Rights Council in July 2017, States adopted Resolution A/HRC/RES/35/20 on Human Rights and Climate Change, which recognizes and provides solutions for migrants and persons displaced across international borders in the context of climate change. The Resolution, championed by Bangladesh, Viet Nam and the Philippines, was a momentous development in linking the human rights of migrants and climate change and it paved the way to several discussions and reports being developed by the Council and OHCHR to advance understanding on the topic. Available from http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/35/20.

¹¹ United Nations (2018). *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. Available from https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf.

the Governments of Germany and Bangladesh as the successor to the Nansen Initiative.¹² PDD has a Steering Group composed of 17 States and the European Union and an Advisory Committee with over 100 organizations and experts from around the world.¹³ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are members of the Platform, participating at both governing and implementing levels. PDD's work focuses on global and regional policy development and national and regional activities,¹⁴ based on the recommendations endorsed by more than 100 States in the Nansen Initiative Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Person in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (Protection Agenda).¹⁵

The International Organization for Migration is one of the UN agencies addressing the migration, environment and climate change nexus.¹⁶ The Organization pursues three broad objectives in managing



In Bangladesh, the Sirajganj, community is affected by river erosion. Many people were displaced several times due to the river erosion. © IOM 2016 / Amanda Nero

¹² The Nansen Initiative was a consultative process led by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland with the objective of forming a common understanding on the issue of cross-border disaster-induced displacement. The Nansen Initiative concluded with the endorsement of the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Person in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change by more than 100 governmental delegations at a global conference in October 2015.

¹³ PDD (2018). *A State-led Process Working towards better Protection for People Displaced across Borders in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*. Available from https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Platform-on-Disaster-Displacement-leaflet-EN_for_website.pdf.

¹⁴ See the *PDD Strategic Framework together with Annex I: Table of Outcomes and Outputs and Annex II: Workplan 2016-2019*. Available from <https://disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/our-architecture>.

¹⁵ Nansen Initiative (2015). *Protection Agenda*, p.44-49.

¹⁶ PDD (2018a). *Implementation of the Workplan of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage WIM) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Pillar II: Policy – International/Regional Activity II.3 The United Nations system's mandates with respect to averting, minimizing and addressing Displacement related to climate change: Considerations for the future*. Available from

environmental migration, intervening at every stage of the migration cycle: minimize forced migration, assist and protect people when forced migration does occur, and facilitate migration to adapt to a changing climate.¹⁷ Focusing on conducting research on the nexus for decision-making, building the capacity of policymakers, supporting policy coherence and development, and operational response, IOM works at all levels - local, national, regional and global - with over 400 field locations in the world, including in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.¹⁸

In light of these disaster displacement realities and the work already under way, the Government of Bangladesh, the Platform on Disaster Displacement and the International Organization for Migration are organizing this regional meeting to bring attention to, and form a joint understanding on how to address the challenges of human mobility in the context of sudden- and slow-onset disaster events linked to natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change.

This background paper informs the “Annual Thematic Meeting of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) - Striving together for addressing displacement due to slow and sudden-onset disasters” taking place in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 24 to 25 February 2019. The Meeting will draw on experiences from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific to inform global policy processes as well as regional and national activities to address disaster displacement.

The objectives of the meeting are:

1. To analyze the effects of sudden-onset events like tropical cyclones, tidal bore, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide etc. on human mobility and the ways and means of further enhancing preventive, adaptive and mitigation policies related to such mobility for better protection of displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement.
2. To analyze the effects of slow-onset events like sea level rise, river erosion, flood, drought etc. on human mobility and the ways and means of further enhancing living conditions of displaced persons by ensuring preventive, adaptive and mitigation policies related to such mobility.
3. To examine on how sudden and slow onset events are interrelated and not fully distinguishable from each other, and thus the needs of identical and different approaches for different types of natural events and subsequent human mobility, to ensure better protection for displaced population and persons at risk of displacement.
4. To produce some 'take away' from the discussion and exchange of best practices and ideas through a 'Dhaka Declaration'.

<https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/WIM%20TFD%20Activity%20II3%20UN%20Entities%20Displacement%20Mapping%20Report%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>.

¹⁷ IOM (2014). *IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change*, p.xii. IOM, Geneva. Available from www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/iom-outlook-migration-environment-and-climate-change-1.

¹⁸ IOM (2018). *IOM's Engagement in Migration Environment and Climate Change*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/ioms-engagement-migration-environment-and-climate-change>.

II. Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters, Environmental Degradation and Climate Change in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific

South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific have a long history of human mobility. Mobility in these sub-regions has been driven mainly by a search for better opportunities and safety. But one underlying factor that has been shaping these movements is the surrounding natural environment.¹⁹

Identifying the way disasters, environmental degradation and climate change interact with people's decisions to move or compel them to leave is an important task. For the purposes of this paper and building upon the 2010 Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework²⁰ human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change will be discussed within three categories: (forced) displacement, (predominantly voluntary) migration, and (voluntary or forced) planned relocation.²¹

At the international level, there is no legal category for this type of movement and there is no agreed legal definition either. There is however, a common understanding that the natural environment acts as a driver of human mobility in various ways. Movements can be forced or voluntary, temporary or permanent, and within or across borders, and most often present a combination of these traits. There is thus an implicit recognition that people can be displaced, that they might decide to move before the situation worsens and that people need to be relocated.

Other conceptual frameworks have also been developed for different purposes ('environmental migrants', 'climate displaced persons', 'climate migrants/refugees', 'disaster displaced person' etc.). The Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, endorsed by more than 100 States, focusing on the forced and sudden aspects of these movements, defines disaster displacement as: "*situations where people are forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard*".²² IOM uses a working definition for environmental migration, which is purposefully broad, showing the complexities of the movement: "[e]nvironmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad."²³

¹⁹ Mohammed, M., J. Galindo, O. Blinn and J. Millman, IOM (2018). *After the Storm - Building resilience in the aftermath of disaster*. Available from <https://features.iom.int/stories/after-the-storm/>.

²⁰ The Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework, as part of the Cancun Agreements (paragraphs 11-35), was adopted at the 2010 Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Cancun, Mexico (COP 16/ CMP 6), available from <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=4>. Paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Framework says: "14. Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following: (f) Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels."

²¹ This conceptual framework is also in line with subsequent Decisions of the Parties to the UNFCCC at COP24 as well as with the Human Rights Resolution 35/20, the UN Secretary-General Report A/72/348 on 'International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development') together with the subsequent UNGA Resolution A/RES/72/132 of 11 December 2017, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and the Kampala Convention, among others. The use of the word 'compelled' in the GCM and displacement in GCR, also suggest an emerging consensus.

²² Nansen Initiative (2015), p.16.

²³ IOM (2014), p. 6.

New disaster displacements in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific		
	COUNTRY	ESTIMATE
1.	Philippines	2,529,000
2.	India	1,346,000
3.	Bangladesh	946,000
4.	Viet Nam	633,000
5.	Nepal	384,000
6.	Indonesia	365,000
7.	Myanmar	351,000
8.	Sri Lanka	135,000
9.	Malaysia	82,000
10.	Thailand	50,000
11.	Australia	31,000
12.	Afghanistan	27,000
13.	Cambodia	15,000
14.	Vanuatu	14,000
15.	New Zealand	6,300
16.	Pakistan	1,800
17.	Papua New Guinea	1,400
18.	French Polynesia*	1,100
19.	Solomon Islands	580
20.	New Caledonia*	570
21.	Fiji	370
22.	Lao PDR	190
23.	Brunei	94
24.	Maldives	76
25.	Bhutan	<i>Not Available</i>
26.	Cook Islands	<i>Not Available</i>
27.	Kiribati	<i>Not Available</i>
28.	Marshall Islands	<i>Not Available</i>
29.	Micronesia	<i>Not Available</i>
30.	Nauru	<i>Not Available</i>
31.	Niue	<i>Not Available</i>
32.	Palau	<i>Not Available</i>
33.	Samoa	<i>Not Available</i>
34.	Singapore	<i>Not Available</i>
35.	Timor Leste	<i>Not Available</i>
36.	Tonga	<i>Not Available</i>
37.	Tuvalu	<i>Not Available</i>
TOTAL:		6,920,480
Source: IDMC GRID 2018		
<i>*These territories are PIF Members.</i>		

There is evidence that migration and displacement take different shapes and forms in different regions. Together, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific are the world's most disaster-prone sub-regions. Sudden-onset natural hazards such as flooding, landslides, cyclones, storms and volcanic eruptions are some of the most frequent and cause the highest risks and rates of displacement. The sub-regions are also affected by slower processes of environmental change and degradation, such as sea level rise, river and coastal erosion, desertification, drought and land degradation. The adverse effects of climate change may increase the number of meteorological events, such as storms, cyclones or hydrological drought, while also intensifying the severity of specific events. In addition, in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific there is an increase in the density of population in areas that are highly seismic or highly disaster-prone areas, thus augmenting the risk of loss and damage linked to disasters.

Some countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific are also among the most vulnerable in the world. They are least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked countries (LLDCs) and/or small island developing states (SIDS), thus facing additional challenges for development, climate change action and resilience building.²⁴ Many of these countries do not have the necessary resources to cope with climate change, disasters and environmental degradation, and the associated mobility of people. Their structural constraints, including inadequate capacity and insufficient resources, as well as the geographical disadvantage undermine their resilience. In addition, poor infrastructure and economic fragility in some parts of the sub-regions exacerbate the intensity of natural hazards, leading to disasters and related displacement.²⁵

Disaster Displacement

In 2017 alone, some 7 million people were displaced within their country due to sudden-onset disasters in

²⁴ IOM and OHRLLS (forthcoming). *Climate Change and Migration in Vulnerable Countries - A Snapshot in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*.

²⁵ IOM (2016), p. 25.

South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.²⁶ This accounted for 37 per cent of global internal disaster displacement in 2017.²⁷ The Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Viet Nam and Nepal were among the ten worst-affected countries in the world and the top five across the three sub-regions (see the table above). Most displacement in the region happens in the context of floods and storms.

In the first 6 months of 2018 there were 3.3 million new internal displacements associated with disasters in 110 countries and territories.²⁸ The recent Lombok Earthquake in Indonesia in October 2018, displaced more than 432,000.²⁹ In India, the 2018 monsoon season displaced around 373,000 people between late May and June 2018 due to the floods.³⁰ The Philippines made the headlines again in the first part of 2018, with tropical storm Sanba/Basyang leading to 149,000 new displacements and the Mayon volcano eruption to 91,000, respectively.³¹

There were several other natural hazards later in the year of 2018 that caused additional displacement and evacuation across the region, such as super Typhoon Mangkhut (148,000 people displaced in the Philippines)³² and Typhoon Yutu/Rosita (62,000 people displaced in the Philippines).³³ Afghanistan is currently facing its worst drought in decades with over 223,000 individuals displaced in the western provinces between January and October 2018.³⁴ Tropical Depression Usman that struck the Philippines at the end of December 2018 displaced around 360,000 people, some living in evacuation centers and others with relatives or friends.³⁵ In Thailand, 30,000 people in coastal districts were evacuated into shelters prior to Tropical Storm Pabuk making landfall in January 2019.³⁶

When considering population size, the Pacific Island States experience some of the highest levels of per capita displacement. The exposure and vulnerability of small, low-lying coastal and island countries to storms and flooding as well as the adverse effects of climate change are determinants of such high levels. For example, in 2016 Fiji (2nd) and Tonga (4th) ranked among the top 10 in the world in terms of highest per capita disaster displacement.³⁷

Estimates show that global disaster displacement risk has doubled since the 1970s, and 36 per cent of current global risk is concentrated in East Asia and the Pacific, while South Asia's displacement risk represents 30 per cent.³⁸ In fact, the first eight countries in IDMC's disaster displacement risk ranking are

²⁶ Calculation by author based on the figures in the IDMC GRID 2018.

²⁷ In 2018 18.8 million people were displaced within their countries due to sudden-onset disasters according to IDMC GRID 2018.

²⁸ IDMC (2018a). *Mid-year Figures - Internal displacement in 2018, 12 September 2018*, p. 2. Available from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201809-mid-year-figures.pdf>.

²⁹ IOM (2018a) *Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Indonesia — Lombok Narrative Report 2 (7 November 2018)*, p.1. Available from <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/indonesia-%E2%80%94-lombok-narrative-report-2-7-november-2018>. This number decreased to just over 124,000 as people whose houses were not damaged, returned home.

³⁰ IDMC (2018a), p.7.

³¹ IDMC (2018a), p.8.

³² OCHA (2018). *Flash Update No. 6 Philippines: Typhoon Mangkhut 19 September 2018*. Available from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20180916%20Typhoon%20Mangkhut%20Update%20no%206%20FINAL.pdf>.

³³ OCHA (2018a). *Flash Update No. 3 (Final update) Philippines: Typhoon Yutu 1 November 2018*. Available from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20181101%20Typhoon%20Yutu%20Flash%20Update%20no%203.pdf>.

³⁴ IOM (2018b). *US Airlift Targets 70,000 Afghans Displaced by Drought - Press Release*. Available from <https://www.iom.int/news/us-airlift-targets-70000-afghans-displaced-drought>.

³⁵ Calculations by author based on OCHA (2018b). *Asia and the Pacific: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (8 - 14 Jan 2019)*. Available from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ROAP_Snapshot_190114.pdf.

³⁶ OCHA (2018b).

³⁷ IDMC (2017). *Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2017*, p.37. Available from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/pdfs/2017-GRID.pdf>.

³⁸ IDMC (2017a). *Global Disaster Displacement Risk A baseline for future work - Thematic report*, p. 13. Available from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201710-IDMC-Global-disaster-displacement-risk.pdf>.

from South Asia and South East Asia.³⁹ Densely-populated cities and settlements on seismic fault lines, flood-prone river basins, or in climate-vulnerable areas, such as the margins of coastal cities exposed to cyclones and storm surges, are at the roots of the high disaster displacement risk.⁴⁰

The adverse effects of climate change are expected to increase the numbers of people on the move in the context of sudden onset and slow onset disaster events and processes. By accelerating the frequency and intensity of weather-related events, climate change contributes to displacement. Projections for the future show that up to 40.5 million people might be forced to move in South Asia alone by 2050 because of climate change, unless action is taken.⁴¹ This would represent 1.8 per cent of the sub-region's population at that time.

In addition, climate variability related to changes in precipitation and temperature patterns as well as increased frequency of weather events like El Niño/La Niña also affect natural resources and agricultural patterns, which contribute to human mobility. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 1.5°C Report warns that migration and displacement will increase due to sea level rise, temperature increase and drought, unless climate action is scaled up.⁴² In the light of such dire consequences, some people choose to move to avoid displacement, migrating or relocating to less vulnerable areas.

Migration and Planned Relocation

Migration, is a widely used strategy to cope with or to adapt to slower process of environmental degradation, including the adverse effects of climate change, on a seasonal, temporary or permanent basis. Migrating by choice can also reduce the risk of displacement. At the same time, migration can contribute to climate change adaptation via remittances and the knowledge gained by returning migrants. However, if not well managed, migration can pose high protection risks and put people in vulnerable situations, hence the need to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration pathways.

In cases where people's livelihoods depend on land resources now affected by climate change, migrating can be a way to ensure food security, diversify incomes and access better opportunities. Both rural to rural migration and rural to urban migration are common in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific for seeking livelihoods elsewhere within the country.

International migration also takes place, although on a smaller scale than internal movements. In the Pacific, for example, States developed several international labor migration schemes that may result in income diversification, including for those affected by climate change.⁴³ However this option needs to be fully explored and understood to make labor migration schemes more responsive to this need. In the case of low-lying island States in the Pacific, international migration might become an imperative, as sea-level rise threatens the future habitability and existence of their territories.

In Small Island Developing States (SIDS), such as those in the Pacific, IPCC explains that both internal and international migration due to sea-level rise will increase at 1.5°C temperature rise.⁴⁴ This will most likely

³⁹ The eight countries are: India, China, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Philippines, Myanmar, Pakistan and Indonesia. See IDMC (2017a) p. 10-11.

⁴⁰ Ionesco, D., D. Mokhnacheva and F. Gemenne (2017), p.60-61.

⁴¹ Rigaud, K.K. et al. (2018).

⁴² IPCC (2018), Chapter 3, p.244-245.

⁴³ Coelho, Sabira, and Angelica Neville (2017). *Effects of Climate Change on Human Mobility in the Pacific and Possible Impact on Canada*. IOM, Canberra. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/effects-climate-change-human-mobility-pacific-and-possible-impact-canada>.

⁴⁴ IPCC (2018), Chapter 5, p.452 and Chapter 3, p.181.

add to existing urbanization trends, such as population movements from rural outer atolls to inner more populated islands, and from rural to urban areas, as people may seek opportunities in urban areas.

Another measure to avert and minimize displacement due to the changing environment is planned relocation of populations away from risk-prone areas. This measure can also reduce the risk of disasters. Nevertheless, planned relocation can be highly disruptive for societies and remains a challenging process for the government to undertake while ensuring that affected communities are appropriately consulted and their human rights protected. As a result, it should be a measure of last resort only, when no other option of prevention, risk reduction or adaptation is feasible or have been exhausted.

Planned relocation is already taking place in certain parts of South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, such as Bangladesh, Fiji, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Viet Nam.⁴⁵ In Viet Nam, for example, relocation programmes implemented by the Government to decrease the exposure and vulnerability of populations at risk, while allowing people to remain close to their area of origin, are a main adaptation response to environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change, while also reducing the risks to floods and landslide. For instance, the “Living with Floods” policy for relocating people away from the vulnerable areas of the Mekong River Delta allowed about 200,000 households to move away from disaster-prone areas and improve their housing conditions, but not without limitations.⁴⁶

In Fiji, there is also a high need for planned relocation programmes to reduce risks and vulnerabilities due to environmental degradation, climate change and disasters. The government recently launched its Planned Relocation Guidelines. In 2016, more than 60 villages were selected for relocation, as Tropical Cyclone Winston augmented this number.⁴⁷ Moreover, in Vanuatu, slower processes of environmental degradation, including erosion, falling volcanic ash, sea level rise and El Niño-induced drought, is motivating some communities to consider relocation as an adaptation option.⁴⁸

Ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration pathways and inclusive and human rights-based planned relocations is crucial for people to cope with and adapt to slower processes of environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change. Nevertheless, migration and planned relocation can also be perceived as undesirable, especially for communities that have strong place-based identities. As a result, climate change action and disaster risk reduction can be key to ensure that communities do not become trapped in the future.

⁴⁵ UNHCR, Georgetown University and IOM (2018). *A toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/toolbox-planning-relocations-protect-people-disasters-and-environmental-change>.

⁴⁶ Anh, Dang Nguyen, Irene Leonardelli and Ana Alicia Dipierri (2016). *Assessing the Evidence: Migration, Environment and Climate Change in Viet Nam*, p.44-45. IOM, Geneva. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/assessing-evidence-migration-environment-and-climate-change-viet-nam>.

⁴⁷ Coelho and Neville (2017), p. 16. And McNamara, Karen E., and Helene Jacot Des Combes (2015), *Planning for Community Relocations Due to Climate Change in Fiji*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/planning-community-relocations-due-climate-change-fiji>.

⁴⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2018). *National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement*, p.11. Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office, Port Vila. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement-2018>.

III. Policy Horizons

Human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change is a reality and a challenge for countries and their populations. There has been unprecedented progress in recent decades to address this nexus. Responses are being implemented at local, national, regional and global levels by a multitude of actors. Active actors include States, International Organizations, United Nations agencies, civil society, academia, affected communities and migrants themselves. Much can still be done to make policies and the efforts of stakeholders in these areas more coherent and extend them to all areas of the world where they are needed.

Three broad areas of policy and operational interventions emerged: i) solutions for people to stay in their homes; ii) solutions for people to move with dignity; and iii) solutions for people on the move already.⁴⁹ This approach is in line with the aim of averting, minimizing and addressing displacement under the UNFCCC⁵⁰ as well as with the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda to focus on measures managing disaster displacement risk and protecting disaster displaced persons.⁵¹



All of the residents in Jon Knes, the 'floating village', in Cambodia are seasonal nomads who live on small houses built on floating platforms allowing their homes to rise and fall with the water levels over the year. Their main livelihood, fishing, has been affected by climate change, as it has become harder to catch quality fish over the past years. © IOM 2016 / Muse Mohammed

⁴⁹ IOM (2014).

⁵⁰ UNFCCC (2017). *Terms of References of the Task Force on Displacement*. Available from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/tor_task_force.pdf.

⁵¹ Nansen Initiative (2015). *Protection Agenda*, p.44-49.

Finding solutions for people to stay in their homes ensures that the risk of forced and unmanaged mobility i.e. displacement is averted as much as possible. Measures may include disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, resilience building and community stabilization.⁵²

Solutions for people to move with dignity help minimize the number of people displaced, by facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration. Measures may include: ensuring migration pathways via free movement protocols, labor schemes or transhumance agreements; voluntary returns; and, as a last resort, planned relocations of people living in high risk areas.⁵³

Finally, identifying solutions for people on the move, including addressing, preparing and responding to displacement when it happens, means ensuring assistance and protection as well as seeking lasting solutions for those on the move due to disasters, environmental degradation and climate change. Measures may include: contingency planning; humanitarian relief aid; granting, expediting or waiving (humanitarian) visas; non-return policies; voluntary return; and reintegration strategies.⁵⁴

As a result, this background paper focuses on policy advances and on tools to implement policy within the areas of management of human mobility, disaster risk reduction and climate change action.

Management of Human Mobility – Helping People to Move and Helping People on the Move

In 2018, the international community has adopted two global frameworks for managing human mobility across borders: the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)*⁵⁵ and the *Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)*,⁵⁶ as laid out in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.⁵⁷

The Global Compact on Refugees provides some entry points for future advancements on addressing the links between human mobility and climate, environmental degradation and disasters. In particular, the GCR recognizes that climate, environmental degradation and disasters interact with the root causes of refugee movements. In addition, the GCR explains that external forced displacements may occur due to sudden-onset disasters and environmental degradation, and that the UNHCR - IOM partnership is crucial for responding to such movements. It also emphasizes the need for disaster risk reduction measures to prevent future displacements and highlights the need for regional and sub-regional approaches to implement the GCR.⁵⁸ These provisions represent a sound progress in international refugee policy and complement well the detailed approach of the GCM on this topic. However, much is still needed to fully clarify the obligations of States under existing normative frameworks with regards to the international protection of those displaced in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change.

⁵² As defined in the IOM (2018c). *Implementation of the Workplan of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Pillar II: Policy – International/Regional Activity II.2 Mapping Human Mobility (Migration, Displacement and Planned Relocation) and Climate Change in International Processes, Policies and Legal Frameworks*, p.7. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/WIM%20TFD%20Activity%20II.2%20International%20Policies%20Mapping%20-%20Analysis%20Report%20August%202018.pdf>. And PDD (2018a).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ UN (2018).

⁵⁶ UN (2018a). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees A/73/12, Part II: Global compact on refugees*. General Assembly Official Records Seventy-third Session Supplement No. 12. Available from https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf.

⁵⁷ Ionesco, D. and E. Mach (2017). *New steps for migration policy: The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants recognizes the crucial role of environmental degradation, disasters and climate change for human mobility*. IOM Environmental Migration Portal. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration-new-york-declaration>.

⁵⁸ IOM (2018c), p.24-26.

The Global Compact for Migration represents the first-ever negotiated global migration framework at the international level. On the basis of 23 objectives, States are committed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary international migration.⁵⁹ For the first time in an international framework on migration, States recognized that disasters, environmental degradation and climate change are drivers of human mobility, creating a space for various policy and operational responses under the GCM.

The GCM articulates a comprehensive understanding of the challenges linked to human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change, addressing all its forms: voluntary migration, planned relocation, evacuation, displacement, and returns. It also calls for policy coherence across sectors to address the drivers of mobility, drawing on a number of global instruments: the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.⁶⁰

Practically, at the global level, the GCM is set to lead to better international cooperation and collaboration among States via the International Migration Review Forum and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), and among UN agencies through the UN Migration Network coordinated by IOM. At the same time, the GCM establishes a capacity building mechanism consisting of a connection hub, a knowledge platform and a start-up fund.

The GCM also emphasizes the importance of working at the regional level to address and manage human mobility driven by disasters, environmental degradation and climate change at all steps of the migration cycle. The GCM calls to:

“Harmonize and develop approaches and mechanisms at subregional and regional levels to address the vulnerabilities of persons affected by sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, by ensuring they have access to humanitarian assistance that meets their essential needs with full respect for their rights wherever they are, and by promoting sustainable outcomes that increase resilience and self-reliance, taking into account the capacities of all countries involved.”⁶¹

To implement the GCM, policy opportunities have been proposed within the Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) on migration⁶² and within the UN Regional Economic Commissions. Several policy processes on human mobility, including RCPs, in South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific have already addressed human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change from various angles. For example, the 21st Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC), focused on “Climate Change and Migration”. While human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and the adverse

⁵⁹ Ionesco, D. and M. T. Chazalnoel (2018). *10 key takeaways from the GCM on environmental migration: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) – Perspectives on Environmental Migration*. IOM Environmental Migration Portal. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/10-key-takeaways-gcm-environmental-migration>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Objective 2 Paragraph 18.k) of the GCM in UN (2018).

⁶² PDD (2018b). *State-led, Regional, Consultative Processes: Opportunities to develop legal frameworks on disaster displacement*. In: ‘Climate Refugees’: Beyond the Legal Impasse (S. Behrman and A. Kent, eds.). Routledge, London and New York, pp. 126–154. Available from www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/climate-refugees-beyond-legal-impasse.

effects of climate change is a major topic in the Pacific, it was rather new for the immigration directors who usually discuss issues such as visa, labor mobility, border security, among others.⁶³ The Dhaka Declaration of the Colombo Process⁶⁴ in 2011 also mentions climate change and migration, calling for further action on the nexus of environmental degradation and climate change, and human mobility, including labor migration.⁶⁵ Such examples show an increasing awareness of the nexus in these sub-regions, which could lead to policy development and concrete action, in line with the GCM.

At the national level, internal displacement in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change is also of concern. Both the GCM and the GCR focus on cross-border movements. At the global level, the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have been acknowledged as the international standards for the protection of internally displaced persons and they are also widely regarded as the benchmark for preventing, responding to, and finding solutions for internal displacement. They are applicable in disaster, environmental degradation and climate change contexts.

A significant number of States have used the Guiding Principles to guide the creation of national legislation, policies, and strategies on internal displacement.⁶⁶ In South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the majority of countries have or are developing national internal displacement laws or policies,⁶⁷ some capturing the links with disaster, environmental degradation and climate change contexts. At the sub-regional level, there are no frameworks on internal displacement yet.

Certain countries went a step further and already developed specialized policies, such as the *Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement Policy*⁶⁸ and the *Fiji Planned Relocation Guidelines*.⁶⁹ Kiribati and Tuvalu's national labor migration policies maximize the contributions migrant workers can make to adaptation at home and also identify climate change as one reason to increase efforts to find labor mobility opportunities abroad.⁷⁰ Other national policies focusing on human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change are currently being developed in South Asia, in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal, in the form of "model national plans".⁷¹

Looking Forward – Implementing the Global Compact for Migration

Looking forward, governments in these sub-regions could commit to strengthening regional discussions, guidance and agreements specifically on human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental

⁶³ PDD (2018c). *Annual Narrative Report: Platform on Disaster Displacement (1 July 2017-30 June 2018)*. Internal Document.

⁶⁴ The Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia, otherwise known as the Colombo Process, covers the Asia region with member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

⁶⁵ Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh and IOM (2011). *Report of the Fourth Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia - Migration with Dignity, 19 – 21 April 2011 Dhaka, Bangladesh*. Available from <https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/rcps/colombo/Report-of-the-Fourth-Ministerial-Conference-Colombo-Process-2011.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Global Protection Cluster (2019). GP20 Activities and Initiatives. Available from <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/news-and-events/gp20-activities-and-initiatives/>.

⁶⁷ Countries with IDP policies or laws in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nauru, (Republic of) Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu and Vietnam (24 out of 35 countries). See the *Global Database on IDP Laws and Policies*. Available from <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/global-database-on-idp-laws-and-policies/>.

⁶⁸ Government of Vanuatu (2018).

⁶⁹ Government of Fiji (2018). *Planned Relocation Guidelines - A framework to undertake climate change related relocation*. Available from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c3c92204.html>.

⁷⁰ IOM (2017). *Climate Change and International Migration in Asia and the Pacific, Background Paper - Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, 6-8 November 2017, Bangkok*, p.20. Internal Document.

⁷¹ Ibid. p.22.

degradation and climate change in order to guide action. Opportunities could be explored within several regional fora, such as: the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and Bali Process. Synergies with other regional policy processes not specially focused on human mobility, described in the next section, could also be explored, to enhance policy coherence, in line with and in support of the implementation of the GCM commitments.

What is more, the numerous bilateral labor agreements and memoranda of understanding existing in Asia and the Pacific could also be leveraged to address migration, displacement and planned relocation in the



A local councillor and women from a coastal village in Killerton, Papua New Guinea, pose where their crops and homes used to be around 10 years ago prior to losing it to coastal erosion.
© IOM 2016 / Muse Mohammed

context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change.⁷² In the Pacific, the need for a region-wide instrument to ensure safe, orderly and regular human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change has been highlighted by States.

To address international protection needs of cross-border displaced persons, States could also align their domestic refugee policies with the GCR. The majority of States in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific have not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention.⁷³ Nevertheless, some States outside of these sub-regions have used their domestic refugee laws to protect and assist cross-border displaced persons in the context of nexus dynamics between conflict or violence and disaster or climate change.⁷⁴ This practice could serve as an inspiration for States in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific if the needs arise. At this time though, in these sub-regions besides migration policies, labor mobility and internal displacement policies seem to be more relevant to identify opportunities for the protection and assistance of those moving in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change.

At the national level, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement 20th Anniversary (GP20)

⁷² IOM (2017), p.22.

⁷³ States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific are: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Philippines, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu (11 out of 35 countries).

⁷⁴ Weerasinghe, S. (2018). *In Harm's Way International protection in the context of nexus dynamics between conflict or violence and disaster or climate change*. UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series, Division of International Protection PPLA/2018/05 December 2018. Available from <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/globalconsult/5c1ba88d4/39-harms-way-international-protection-context-nexus-dynamics-conflict-violence.html>.

Plan of Action⁷⁵ could be leveraged to find and implement solutions for internal displacement in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change. The GP20 Plan of Action draws on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement and promotes the development and implementation of laws and policies on internal displacement. South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific States could use this opportunity to align their internal displacement policies with the Guiding Principles.

There are several tools that States could draw on in their implementation of the GCM at the regional level.⁷⁶ A significant instrument on displacement which is mentioned in the GCM is the *Nansen Initiative Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Person in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*. The Nansen Agenda is a toolbox of effective practices to both protect disaster displaced persons and manage displacement risks. It was endorsed by more than 100 States in 2015 and its implementation is promoted by the PDD. The Agenda contains concrete, practical measures that States can voluntarily adopt and harmonize to admit persons displaced across borders by disasters as well as allow them to stay within the country, such as granting, expediting or extending humanitarian visas or providing discretionary power to immigration officials during disaster situations. It also proposes measures to prevent cross-border disaster-displacement altogether, including through disaster risk reduction, climate change action and by addressing internal displacement and moving people out of high-risk areas.

The *Toolbox on Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change*,⁷⁷ which complements the *Guidance for Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocations*,⁷⁸ provides concrete suggestions for States and other actors who are planning to relocate people in order to protect them from disasters and environmental change. The Toolbox includes checklists for government officials to use at every step of the relocation process as well as advice on how to ensure an inclusive and human rights-based approach.

To facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to the adverse effects of climate change, efforts focus on integrating human mobility considerations in disaster, environmental and climate change policies of countries and vice-versa, integrating disaster, environmental and climate change consideration in migration, refugee, internal displacement and planned relocation policies. IOM's bilateral work with States supports national policymakers to ensure such policy coherence via technical assistance and advice, including the *IOM Capacity Building Programme on Migration, Environment and Climate Change*. UNHCR

⁷⁵ Global Protection Cluster (2018). *20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: A Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018-2020* 23 May 2018. Available from <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/assets/files/20180523-gp20-plan-of-action-final.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) (2019) *Key International Standards and Guidelines Relating to Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*. Available from <https://rwi.lu.se/app/uploads/2019/02/Background-Brief.pdf>. And RWI (forthcoming). *Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Law, Policy and Practice in Ten Countries*. See also UNHCR (2018). *Implementation of the Workplan of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage WIM) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Pillar II: Policy – International/Regional Activity II.4 Mapping of existing international and regional guidance and tools on averting, minimizing, addressing and facilitating durable solutions to displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change*. Available from https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/WIM%20TFD%20Activity%20II.4%20Mapping%20Tools%20and%20Guidance_DRAFT_9%20May%202018%20180524.docx.

⁷⁷ UNHCR, Georgetown University and IOM (2018).

⁷⁸ Brookings Institution, Georgetown University and UNHCR (2015). *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change Through Planned Relocation*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/guidance-protecting-people-disasters-and-environmental-change-through-planned-relocation>.

as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) also address this issue with regards to domestic refugee and labor law.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Action – Helping People to Stay

Addressing the drivers of human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change is at the core of averting and minimizing displacement, and facilitating migration and planned relocation with dignity. To take action in this regard, the international community is guided by the UNFCCC together with the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. These policy frameworks are in line with the overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially SDG 10 target 10.7 on orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, SDG 11 target 11.5 on reducing the loss and damage of disasters, and SDG 13 on climate action.

Adopted in 2015 at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement is a breakthrough for integrating migration concerns in a climate change treaty.⁷⁹ The Paris Agreement recognizes State's obligations on human rights and migrants when taking climate action.⁸⁰ COP21 also mandated the creation of a Task Force on Displacement to develop "recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change".⁸¹ The Task Force delivered its mandate at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, where Parties welcomed the recommendations, which call for strong action at the regional and national levels to respond both to mobility drivers as well as to human mobility itself.

These advancements are based on a long engagement in climate change action by human mobility actors.⁸² A significant steppingstone was the COP16 in 2010 in Mexico where for the first time, provisions related to displacement, migration and planned relocation in the context of climate change were included in paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework.⁸³

At the national level, there are several climate change national adaptation plans, policies and strategies in South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific that refer to human mobility as a consequence of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, and call for action.⁸⁴ For example, most recently, Fiji has finalized its National Adaptation Plan which "seeks to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible

⁷⁹ IOM (2018c), p.8.

⁸⁰ See the Preamble of the Paris Agreement: "Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, [...] [and] migrants [...]." Available from http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english.pdf.

⁸¹ See COP21 Decision 1 under Loss and Damage: paragraph 49. Available from http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english.pdf.

⁸² For a timeline of migration in UNFCCC see IOM and PDD (2018). *Task Force on Displacement Stakeholder Meeting "Recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change"* Château de Bossey Conference Centre, Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland, 14-15 May 2018 - Background Paper. Available from https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/WIM-TFD-Stakeholder-Meeting_Background-Paper.pdf.

⁸³ See Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2010) paragraph 14.f. Available from <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=4>.

⁸⁴ IOM (2018d). *Implementation of the Workplan of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Pillar I: Policy/Practice – National/Subnational Activity I.1: Mapping Human Mobility and Climate Change in Relevant National Policies and Institutional Frameworks*, p.9. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/WIM%20TFD%20Activity%20I.1%20National%20Mapping%20-%20Analysis%20Report%20August%202018.pdf>.

migration and mobility of people,”⁸⁵ demonstrating increasing policy coherence and awareness of addressing the links between human mobility and climate change.

The 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction recognizes that one of the impacts of disasters on people is their displacement.⁸⁶ It also acknowledges displacement as an important concern for people-centered disaster risk reduction and provides several measures for disaster risk reduction policy and practice to address displacement and migration in the context of disasters. Many of these commitments are reflected in the Global Compact for Migration.

The 2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction has taken this discourse forward recognizing displacement as a consequence of disasters. The Outcome Documents of the Platform⁸⁷ acknowledge that disaster loss increases the likelihood of displacement and call for national and regional disaster risk reduction policies to include provisions aimed at reducing displacement risk and addressing protection needs when displacement takes place.⁸⁸

The regional platforms for disaster risk reduction have also contributed to bringing attention to disaster displacement and proposing regional solutions. For example, the *Ulaanbaatar Declaration* as well as the *Asia Regional Action Plan 2018-2020* resulting from the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), has drawn attention to displacement as a regionally significant trend that needs to be addressed.⁸⁹

Disaster risk reduction and climate change action are also being addressed in other regional fora in these sub-regions. In the Pacific, the *Framework for Resilient Development for the Pacific (FRDP)*, endorsed by the 47th meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 2016, represents a strong example of integrating human mobility in a regional disaster risk reduction strategy. FRDP takes an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction, climate change action and sustainable development and recognizes the need to prevent displacement. It also promotes action to integrate and address the challenges of human mobility in national policies and actions, including relocation and labor migration policies. In Asia, the Asia Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan 2018-2020 has made significant progress in integrating human mobility concerns, though this progress has yet to be seen in the strategies of sub-regional organizations.⁹⁰

At the national level, there is a gap in developing national disaster risk reduction strategies, with only 82 out of the 193 UN States having published national disaster risk reduction strategies.⁹¹ The Pacific region is exceptional in that almost all countries in the region have stand-alone national disaster risk reduction strategies covering multiple hazards, while in Asia less than half of the countries have national, multi-hazard disaster risk reduction strategies. Most of these strategies make some reference to human mobility

⁸⁵ Government of Fiji (2018).

⁸⁶ IOM (2018c), p.56-60.

⁸⁷ See the 2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction High Level Communiqué. Available from https://www.preventionweb.net/files/53439_thecancunhighlevelcommuniquof24may2.pdf. And the Chair’s Summary. Available from https://www.preventionweb.net/files/53989_chairsummaryofthe2017globalplatfor.pdf.

⁸⁸ PDD (2017). *Reporting back – the Platform on Disaster Displacement and the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico*. Available from <https://disasterdisplacement.org/reporting-back-the-platform-on-disaster-displacement-and-the-2017-global-platform-for-disaster-risk-reduction-in-cancun-mexico>.

⁸⁹ PDD (2018). *2018 AMCDRR Side Event: Addressing Human Mobility and Displacement in National DRR Strategies*. Available from <https://disasterdisplacement.org/2018-amcdrr-side-event-addressing-human-mobility-and-displacement-in-national-drr-strategies>.

⁹⁰ Yonetani, M. (2018). *Mapping the Baseline - To what extent are displacement and other forms of human mobility integrated in national and regional disaster risk reduction strategies?*, p.5. Commissioned by the Platform on Disaster Displacement, 2018.

⁹¹ Yonetani, M. (2018), p.4-6 and p.25-26.

issues (displacement, migration, evacuation and relocation) or related-issues, such as the need for shelter and loss of housing.

Looking Forward – Implementing the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework

Looking forward, existing policies, strategies and plans on disaster risk reduction and climate change action could be better leveraged at the regional level to address disasters, environmental degradation and the adverse effects of climate change as drivers of human mobility. In addition to the leading regional plans, opportunities exist in other regional processes too. For example, the regional vulnerable countries programmes are of significant importance, as the majority of the countries in these sub-regions are part of at least one group, LDCs, LLDCs or SIDS. The *Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA)* for LDCs, the *Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA)* for LLDCs and the *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* highlight countries' vulnerability to climate change and its widespread impact, while calling for action.⁹²

In Southeast Asia, the opportunities within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could also be better used for averting and minimizing disaster displacement. ASEAN, particularly through the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), prioritizes climate change action, disaster risk reduction and the protection of migrant workers, as reflected in the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*.⁹³ In addition, the *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)* aims to reduce the severe impacts of disasters and to provide a framework for regional response to disaster emergencies, with a focus on disaster losses. Displacement considerations could be integrated in the AADMER.



Houses along the no-safe zone in Guiuan. Typhoon Haiyan made its first landfall in November 2013, in Guiuan, a town of over fifty thousand residents in Eastern Samar, Philippines. © IOM 2014 / Alan Motus

⁹² IOM and OHRLS (forthcoming).

⁹³ IOM (2017), p.21.

In South Asia, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) supported its Member States to collaborate in the area of “Environment, Natural Disasters and Biotechnology”, especially by assisting with their disaster risk reduction initiatives.⁹⁴ Although not specifically addressing human mobility, SAARC has several regional policies and action plans on disaster risk reduction and climate change that could be used in the context of migration, displacement and planned relocations, following the 2012 Dhaka and 2014 Kathmandu Declarations, and the 2010 Thimphu Statement of Climate Change.⁹⁵

In the Pacific, other processes that could be explored are: the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), which have addressed some parts of the human mobility and disasters, environmental degradation and climate change nexus.

Several opportunities exist across the sub-regions as well. For example, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), an international organization of seven nations of South Asia and South East Asia, has high-level discussions on regional action on disaster management, where human mobility could be considered. The Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development could also be an opportunity as it set climate action (SDG 13) on its agenda for the sixth meeting taking place between 27-29 March 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand.

To continue the work of these processes and to implement these policies at the regional, national and local levels, PDD with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), developed the *Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience*.⁹⁶ The Guidelines provide practical guidance for policymakers and government authorities to integrate displacement and other related forms of human mobility into disaster risk reduction strategies.

To facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to the adverse effects of climate change, efforts focus on integrating migration considerations in climate change National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) of countries. A NAP Guidelines supplement is being prepared by IOM to detail the practical steps to be taken. Other guidelines exist, such as the *Migration for Adaptation Guidebook to Integrate Migration and Translocality into Community-Based Adaptation*⁹⁷ and the *Policy Brief on Integrating human mobility issues within national adaptation plans*.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (2018). *Environment Natural Disasters and Biotechnology*. Available from http://saarc-sec.org/areas_of_cooperation/area_detail/environment-natural-disasters-and-biotechnology/click-for-details_6.

⁹⁵ See the Nansen Initiative (2015a), *Climate Change, Disasters, and Human Mobility in South Asia and Indian Ocean - Background Paper Prepared by the Nansen Initiative Secretariat for the South Asia Regional Consultation Khulna, Bangladesh, 3-5 April 2015*, p.28-29. And SAARC (2015). *Thirteenth SAARC Summit 13 November 2005, Dhaka Declaration*. Available from http://www.saarclaw.org/uploads-saarc/saarc/4605862ae8_FILE.pdf. SAARC (2014). *Eighteenth SAARC Summit Kathmandu, 26-27 November 2014, Declaration of the Eleventh SAARC Summit SAARC/SUMMIT.11/12*. Available from http://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/24375_EIGHTEENTH_SUMMIT_DECLARATION.pdf. And SAARC (2010). *Sixteenth SAARC Summit, 28-29 April 2010, Thimphu Silver Jubilee Declaration “Towards a Green and Happy South Asia” SAARC/SUMMIT.16/15*. Available from http://www.saarclaw.org/uploads-saarc/saarc/3936e137f6_FILE.pdf and the *Thimphu Statement on Climate Change (Adopted by Heads of State or Government, Sixteenth SAARC Summit) Thimphu 28-29 April 2010*. Available from http://saarc-sec.org/assets/responsive_filemanager/source/Files%20for%20Areas%20of%20Cooperation/ENB/THIMPHU%20STATEMENT%20ON%20CLIMATE%20CHANGE.docx.

⁹⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), PDD, IOM, IDMC, UNHCR, the German Federal Foreign Office and UNISDR (2018). *Words into Action guidelines - Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience (Public consultation version)*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/words-action-guidelines-disaster-displacement-how-reduce-risk-address-impacts-and-strengthen>.

⁹⁷ TransRe Project - University of Bonn, RMIT University - Melbourne, University of Vienna and Raks Thai Foundation (2018). *Migration for Adaptation: A Guidebook to Integrate Migration and Translocality into Community-Based Adaptation*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/migration-adaptation-guidebook-integrate-migration-and-translocality-community-based-adaptation>.

⁹⁸ Warner, K., W. Kälin, S. Martin, Y. Nassef, S. Lee, S. Melde, H. E. Chapuisat, M. Franck and T. Afifi (2014). *Integrating human mobility issues within national adaptation plans*. Available from <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/integrating-human-mobility-issues-within-national-adaptation-plans>.

IV. Conclusion

Human mobility in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change is already a reality in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Disaster displacement, migration and planned relocation as an adaptation strategy to environmental degradation are taking place across the sub-regions and are expected to increase due to the adverse effects of climate change. Both policy and operational efforts by several actors are underway to find and implement solutions for people to stay, solutions for people to move and solutions for people on the move.

At the international policy level, unprecedented breakthroughs have been achieved in the past years. The Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees adopted in 2018 represent a milestone of global migration and displacement governance. They recognize disasters, environmental degradation and climate change as drivers of migration and as interacting with root causes of refugee movements, respectively, and propose concrete actions for States to fully address such population movements, including to prevent forced forms of it.

This milestone is built on previous achievements. The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015 by UNFCCC COP21 Parties is the first international climate change agreement to recognize states' obligations on human rights and migrants. To act on this recognition, COP21 also established a Task Force on Displacement, which developed "recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change", welcomed by Parties at COP24 in Katowice, Poland.

Another achievement has been the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted by States in 2015. The Sendai Framework recognizes displacement as a consequence of disasters and as an important concern for people-centered disaster risk reduction. It also provides several measures for disaster risk reduction policy and practice to reduce and address displacement in the context of disasters.

The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are also relevant and widely regarded as the benchmark for preventing, responding to, and finding solutions for internal displacement, including in the context of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change.

These global policies are calling for strong regional and national implementation. Significant opportunities exist in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific across several policy processes, such as the regional consultative processes on migration as well as regional bodies addressing disaster risk reduction and climate change action. States could also make use of several practical tools developed, including for the protection of internal and cross-border disaster-displaced persons, for facilitating migration and planned relocation as an adaptation strategy to climate change, and for integrating human mobility in national disaster risk reduction strategies and climate change adaptation plans.

This background paper has been drafted to inform the "Annual Thematic Meeting of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) - Striving together for addressing displacement due to slow and sudden-onset disasters" taking place in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 24 to 25 February 2019. The Meeting will draw on experiences from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific to inform global policy processes as well as regional and national activities to address disaster displacement.