

<b>Date:</b>	16 October 2019
<b>Place:</b>	European Union Delegation, Geneva
<b>Time:</b>	13:15 – 14:45
<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Iben Villumsen (European Union) and Abderrahim Aït Slimane (Morocco)
<b>Minutes:</b>	Secretariat, Platform on Disaster Displacement
<b>Attachments:</b>	Group of Friends ToR; PowerPoint presentation from the Envoy

## Summary

The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) is a State-led initiative working towards greater protection of persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change. It is currently chaired by France with Fiji as Vice-Chair. Its 2019-2022 Strategy foresees the establishment of a Group of Friends (GoF) to reach out to, disseminate information and provide a tool for engagement with States interested in disaster displacement. This was the first meeting of the Group of Friends in Geneva. It was co-chaired by the EU and the Kingdom of Morocco. A presentation on the PDD and the Terms of Reference of the Group of Friends are attached to these minutes. More information on the PDD can be found on [www.disasterdisplacement.org](http://www.disasterdisplacement.org).

### 1. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

H.E. François Rivasseau, representing France as the Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement opened the meeting, introducing the Platform on Disaster Displacement as the follow-up to the Nansen Initiative. He highlighted [the four strategic priorities of the PDD for the period of 2019-2022](#) alongside the French focus areas.

He expressed the French Chairmanship's pleasure to see the Group of Friends convened for the first time in Geneva under the co-chairmanship of the European Union (EU) and Morocco, and highlighted its open and non-binding nature as laid out in the Terms of Reference.

The EU and Morocco, in their capacities as co-chairs, welcomed the participants, and informed about the planned format of Group of Friends meetings – each year, approximately two meetings shall be held in Geneva and two meetings in New York. The first meeting in New York is scheduled for early 2020.

### 2. Presentation of the Platform on Disaster Displacement

The Envoy of the Chair, Prof. Walter Kaelin, gave an overview of the PDD and its work.

Emphasizing the humanitarian challenge posed by disaster displacement, and highlighting the data and knowledge gap that exists regarding the numbers and protection needs of disaster displaced person, he stressed the importance of the PDD and State-action in this regard. He provided the background of the establishment of the PDD, starting with the Nansen Initiative, launched by Norway and Switzerland in 2012 and culminating in the endorsement of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda in October 2015 by over 100 governmental delegations. He explained how disaster displacement has been conceptualized following regional consultations around the world gathering

effective practices and laying the foundation of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda toolbox approach which States can now use as reference to implement targeted action preventing and addressing disaster displacement.

Prof. Kaelin laid out the structure of the PDD, with its Steering Group, Advisory Committee, Secretariat, and now, Group of Friends. He also underscored the close cooperation the PDD has with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as well as other UN agencies, civil society, academia and other stakeholders.

He noted the achievements of the first phase of the PDD, feeding messages on disaster displacement into ongoing global policy processes, such as the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, discussions and decisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in efforts at implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. He emphasized the importance of regional guides/guidelines, such as those on Admission and Stay in disaster contexts adopted in the Americas. Another goal is to seek policy coherence across siloes. The aim in the next phase of the PDD, 2019-2022, under the Chairmanship of France and then Fiji (currently Vice-Chair), is to put the global frameworks, concepts and commitments into practice at the regional level. The PDD is not an operational agency but a State-led, multi-stakeholder Platform which aims at supporting States to implement the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda and achieve greater protection for disaster displaced persons.

In response to a question from the representative of Sweden on the cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the links with the Sendai Framework, Prof. Kaelin emphasized the importance of the policy area of disaster risk reduction (DRR) for the PDD. He outlined PDD's work with UNDRR at the policy and practical levels. It is a joint goal of the PDD and UNDRR to support governments in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, notably Targets B and E. This includes to formulate and revise their DRR strategies in a way that includes provisions on disaster displacement and to seek the integrated implementation of these strategies with climate change and development plans. Concretely, a 'Words into Action' guide has been produced to assist States in the practical implementation of the Sendai Framework with regards to disaster displacement. PDD and UNDRR are working with the Norwegian Refugee Council to pilot the guide, which has been launched at the Global Platform on DRR, at the national and regional level.

### **3. Ways how States can Engage with the PDD and on Disaster Displacement**

The EU and Morocco, as co-chairs of the Group of Friends, presented suggestions on how States can engage on disaster displacement, welcoming other Steering Group members to add from their experiences, and inviting all States at the meeting to reach out to the PDD's Chair and Vice-Chair, the Group of Friends co-chairs or the Secretariat for further information.

The co-chairs laid out four major ways in which states might engage, going forward:

- Creating partnerships and engagement by reaching out to other States and partners who have not been involved so far;
- Promoting key messages through global fora, events, and processes, by referring to PDD key messages and information material in statements, and by attending PDD public and side events;

- Engaging in regional efforts by partnering with neighbouring states and engaging regionally in meetings and projects with the support of the PDD, for instance in the Pacific, the Americas, Africa and Southeast Asia where the PDD already runs projects or engages in activities;
- Addressing knowledge gaps by investing in closing the data gap regarding disaster displacement; the PDD Advisory Committee's work in this regard and the African Union's data collection observatory based in Rabat in Morocco are good starting points.

In addition to engagement at the policy level which is coordinated in Geneva and New York, the co-chairs urged those present to engage capital colleagues on disaster displacement and reach out to the PDD when in need of support to formulate national policies and plan regional approaches of relevance to disaster displacement.

#### **4. Questions and Answers**

Sweden and the UK took the floor to welcome the establishment of the PDD Group of Friends and underline their government's readiness to support this initiative as a member. Points of the ensuing discussion included the number and frequency of planned future meetings of the GoF in Geneva and New York and the concrete engagement of the PDD in upcoming global policy processes and events including the 2020 regional-level meetings on implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and regular Migration (GCM); the Global Refugee Forum (GRF); and the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Conference of Parties (COP25/26) to the UNFCCC.

As members of the PDD Steering Group, the Representatives of France, Germany, Mexico and Switzerland took the floor to express their support to the co-chairs of the Group of Friends. They shared their views in how far PDD has contributed to bringing the topic of disaster displacement to the international agenda and providing a dynamic State-led multi-stakeholder mechanism for practical implementation of key global policy frameworks at the regional and national levels.

Representatives of IOM and UNHCR who participated at the meeting by virtue of being Standing Invitees to the PDD Steering Group, also took the floor to welcome the establishment of the Group of Friends. They reminded diplomats in Geneva of the important role in communicating the cross-cutting nature of the topic among policy areas such as disaster risk reduction, Human Rights, climate change adaptation, migration and refugee protection, among others, which requires concerted action by governments, across silos. They referred to studies and knowledge products jointly produced with the PDD and invited States to engage at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum by making pledges or sharing effective practices on disaster displacement.

The Ambassador of the Marshall Islands shared her country's experience, facing the adverse effects of climate change, on a daily basis. She expressed her country's wish to work with the international community, development partners, and friends around the table in reviewing, finalizing, and implementing the climate change adaptation plan for the country.

In closing, the co-chairs encouraged States to engage on disaster displacement and with PDD and refer to the PDD webpage and newsletter for updated information on upcoming events as well as policy messaging.

End/.