



Federal Republic of Germany  
Foreign Office



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

# ANNUAL THEMATIC MEETING OF THE PLATFORM ON DISASTER DISPLACEMENT



Striving together for addressing displacement due to  
slow and sudden-onset disasters

Dhaka, Bangladesh  
24-25 February 2019

## Chair's Summary



1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, as the Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, convened the 'Annual Thematic Meeting of the Platform on Disaster Displacement – Striving together for addressing displacement due to slow and sudden onset disasters' on 24-25 February 2019 in Dhaka.
2. More than 150 participants including representatives from the PDD's Steering Group, regional and international organizations, UN agencies, civil society and academia gathered at the occasion.
3. The meeting was graced with the presence of Hon'ble Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP as the Chief Guest; Mr. Md. Nojibur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister as the Guest of Honour; Mr. Md. Shah Kamal, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief as the Special Guest. Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Shahriar Alam, MP and Hon'ble State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief H.E. Dr. Md. Enamur Rahman, MP were present during the closing ceremony. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**4. The meeting had the objectives to:**

- a. 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;
- b. 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;
- c. examine how sudden and slow onset events are interrelated and at times, 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.

5. Against these objectives, panel discussions were organized with distinguished speakers representing the various relevant stakeholders. The first thematic session addressed 'Displacement Impacts of Sudden-Onset Events in Asia Pacific: Preventive, Adaptive and Responsive Action'. Globally, around 25 million people are newly displaced by disasters each year. Sudden onset disasters triggered by weather related hazards, mainly floods and storms, cause the vast majority of displacement. Asia Pacific is the region which is most heavily affected by disaster displacement (73% of the global total). The host country Bangladesh suffers from river bank erosion in almost 90% of locations as well as flood, drought and salinity in many parts of the country.
6. Response to disaster displacement, as presented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), include coordination mechanisms such as the CCCM cluster and tools and guidelines on addressing displacement inside and outside of camp setting. Response at the national level include policies such as Fiji's recently drafted Planned Relocation Guidelines, led by the government in an integrated approach with partners and based on a robust consultation process. Based on its work in the region, IFRC noted the need to better understand the concrete needs and onward movements of displaced populations, stressing that local communities have a key role and deserve greater capacity building.





7. The second panel discussion focused on 'Addressing Human Mobility in the Context of Slow-Onset Events and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change'. This panel stressed the fact that sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters, at times, are quite interrelated. Sometimes sudden-onset events such as cyclonic storm surges lead to slow-onset events such as salinity. Displacement in response to this can happen immediately or delayed, it can be temporary or permanent. People's perceptions of the drivers of their displacement are usually shaped by social and economic factors. Displacement may exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and create new ones, impacting on the dignity of individuals, especially of women. Much can be done to anticipate and prepare for slow-onset disasters, not only through forecasting and early warning mechanisms, but also building on local and traditional knowledge.
8. Following this, policies covering development, climate change and disaster management should equally consider slow-onset processes. Policy and operational responses should acknowledge the interconnectedness of slow and sudden onset processes. All actors should work together to ensure that forced displacement is minimized and people may migrate out of choice, not a necessity. The approach to address disaster displacement given the interlinkage of sudden-onset events and slow-onset events should be threefold: (i) helping people to stay; (ii) helping people to move; and (iii) helping people who are forced to move.
9. Building on these insights, participants discussed way forward in the session Addressing Human Mobility in the Region, Drawing on Global and Regional Policy Frameworks. Many important global policy frameworks nowadays contain language and provisions on disaster displacement and other forms of human mobility. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in its latest Conference of the Parties (COP24), has welcomed the recommendations to avert, minimize and address disaster displacement related to the adverse effects of climate change and decided to extend the mandate of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism. The Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees contain important provisions on addressing disaster displacement and protecting persons displaced in these contexts. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 recognizes displacement as an important consequence of disasters and the Asia Regional Plan for implementation of the Sendai Framework for example, calls for concrete steps to address it. At the sub-regional level, the likes of the framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) address issues of displacement in the context of climate change and disasters in an integrated manner with development planning.
10. Participants stated that it is now time to move towards implementation of these global policy frameworks at the regional and (sub)national levels. There are many opportunities for greater action and collaboration at



## The first thematic session addressed 'Displacement Impacts of Sudden-Onset Events in Asia Pacific: Preventive, Adaptive and Responsive Action'. Globally, around 25 million people are newly displaced by disasters each year.

the national, bilateral, regional and international level to do so. Political will and dedicated resources are required to build capacity within governments and other key actors to better understand and respond to risks, include human mobility challenges in national planning processes, and finally to support communities and nations in increasing their preparedness and resilience to disasters.

11. The Annual Thematic Meeting was preceded by a civil society meeting convened by Coast Trust Bangladesh on 23 February 2019 gathering representatives of Bangladesh's civil society and representatives from research communities and Universities and the participants in the PDD meeting. This presented an important opportunity to learn about the human impact of disaster displacement and the challenges that Bangladesh faces as a country. They also discussed possible partnership and ways the government and civil society can jointly address these challenges by investing in preparedness, risk reduction and planning.

12. The PDD is entering its third phase. The Strategic Priorities of the timeframe 2019-2022 will build on achievements made so far by the Nansen Initiative and the PDD. The State-led Platform, with the support of its partners, will continue to support States to implement the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda; to advocate for better data and knowledge on disaster displacement; to frame and feed messages on disaster displacement into relevant global and regional policy processes and thereby strengthening policy coherence, notably among migration and refugee policy, Disaster Risk Reduction, climate change action, development and Human Rights. Given the needs and capacities at the (sub)national levels and the regional specificities of disaster displacement, PDD in its next phase, will place greater emphasis on engaging at the regional level, with interested regional organizations and other partners, to support States and other stakeholders in the implementation of these global frameworks.

