

<b>Date:</b>	30 October 2020
<b>Place:</b>	Geneva (virtual, via Zoom)
<b>Time:</b>	10:00-12:00
<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Iben Villumsen (European Union) and Abderrahim Aït Slimane (Morocco)
<b>Minutes:</b>	Secretariat, Platform on Disaster Displacement
<b>Attachments:</b>	PowerPoint presentations from the Envoy of the Chair, International Organization for Migration and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## 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. The Group of Friends (GoF) of the PDD has been established to reach out to, disseminate information and provide a tool for engagement with States interested in disaster displacement. This was the third meeting of the GoF, following one each in Geneva and New York. UN Member States and regional organizations were represented through their Geneva-based Permanent Missions at this virtual meeting, co-chaired by the European Union (EU) and Morocco. This meeting highlighted the collaboration and partnership of the PDD with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and provided a space for discussion of the two agencies' ongoing internal strategic development related to disaster displacement and climate change.

### 1. Welcome and Introductory remarks

The **EU** and **Morocco** opened the meeting, providing the context for the GoF as part of the 2019-2022 Strategy of the PDD and outlining the importance of acquainting the GoF with the close partnership between the PDD and IOM and UNHCR, particularly in the context of the ongoing development of internal strategic documents related to disaster displacement: IOM's Strategy on Migration, Climate Change and the Environment and UNHCR's Strategic Framework on Climate Action.

**France**, as Chair of the PDD, provided introductory remarks, expressing support for the development of the two strategies and highlighting two French-funded projects in West Africa and the Sahel through partnership between PDD, IOM and UNHCR as opportunities for their implementation. France also emphasized the importance of outreach to States not members of the PDD Steering Group, and spoke of the periodic thematic events on disaster displacement that the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations (UN) and other International Organizations in Geneva organizes with the Principals of UN agencies which will be continued in 2021 beyond the end of the French Chairmanship of the PDD.

## **2. Presentation by the Envoy of the Chair of the PDD on the relation between the PDD and the two organizations, IOM and UNHCR**

The **Envoy of the Chair of the PDD, Prof. Walter Kaelin**, outlined the background and evolution of the partnership between the PDD and IOM and UNHCR.

He provided an overview of the establishment of the Nansen Initiative and the consultation process resulting in the endorsement of the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, highlighting the central role of both IOM and UNHCR and the United Nations in the process. He then explained the development of the PDD as the follow-up to the Nansen Initiative and the partnership with IOM and UNHCR to the present day. He emphasized that the range of areas and activities where partnership between PDD and the two agencies take place, from global and regional policy development to improving data and knowledge on displacement linked to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, provides an important mechanism for State-led leadership across policy areas.

## **3. Presentation by UNHCR**

On behalf of UNHCR, **Andrew Harper, Special Advisor on Climate Action** and **Shahrazad Tadjbakhsh, Deputy Director of the Division of International Protection**, presented a few key priority areas from among the number of activities the UNHCR is engaging on with IOM and the PDD, in the implementation of the PDD Workplan 2019-2020. They highlighted UNHCR's focus on action to deal with climate change and its support to the PDD and the issue of disaster displacement as an important space in which it is working together closely with IOM.

They outlined UNHCR's engagement on climate change and disaster displacement over the last three decades and presented how the agency is adapting to meet the needs of an evolving context. They also presented UNHCR's past work and current priority areas for climate action, including work underway in partnership with a number of States and international and regional partners. They provided an overview of the Strategic Framework on Climate Action currently under development, which rests on three pillars: Legal and Normative Approach; Operational Response; and, UNHCR's Environmental Footprint ("Greening the Blue"). They also referred to the recent [UNHCR Legal considerations paper regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters](#) and stressed that the paper did not seek to expand the refugee definition or create new instruments, but that the aim was providing guidance on existing international protection frameworks and other legal standards.

## **4. Presentation by IOM**

On behalf of IOM, **Mariam Traore Chazalnoel, Thematic Specialist on Migration, Environment and Climate Change** and **Alice Baillat, PDD Liaison Officer** presented IOM's engagement with UNHCR and the PDD across all of the PDD's strategic priorities and provided updates on the development of the IOM Strategy on Migration, Climate Change and the Environment.

### Third Group of Friends Meeting

They presented the role of the IOM in strategic partnership from the Nansen Initiative to the present day, including as Standing Invitee to the PDD Steering Group, member of the PDD Advisory Committee and co-chair of the PDD Data and Knowledge Working Group and in co-leading and implementing activities in the PDD Workplan. The strong partnership between PDD and particularly the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division of IOM in activities within and beyond the PDD, including the Task Force on Displacement (TFD) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, was highlighted. Situating the development of the Strategy on Migration, Climate Change and the Environment within the institutional development on environment and climate change over the past three decades, the new forward-looking institutional context of the agency and the increasing role of environmental and climatic drivers on human mobility, they provided a broad overview of the Strategy itself. The Strategy is based on IOM's existing three objectives: avoiding forced migration in context of climate change and environmental degradation; facilitating voluntary and safe migration where people are compelled to move; and, assisting and protecting those already on the move. They explained the extensive consultative process and gave a flavour of the initial insights obtained so far, during their consultations.

### 5. Questions and Answers

In response to a question received in writing from **Madagascar** on good practices on internal displacement in the context of disasters and climate change specifically for Small Island Developing States, **Fiji** explained the process being undertaken by the Fijian government to build community resilience and ensure that the needs of specific communities are taken into consideration. Planned relocation was an option of last resort and they stressed the role of national guidelines on [planned relocation](#) and [displacement in the context of climate change and disasters](#) as important tools to ensure that the government takes a holistic approach to the needs of communities in this process. **Benin** stressed the need to work closely with national institutions. Responding to a question on best practices regarding disaster displacement, the **Envoy of the Chair** further highlighted the [Words into Action guidelines - Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience](#) and the [Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement](#) as tools to ensure better protection for communities in these contexts, in addition to providing examples of measures taken in Somalia to address displacement related to flooding.

**Morocco** then raised several questions, including on displacement in the context of slow-onset events and about joint partnerships between IOM, UNHCR and PDD. The **Envoy of the Chair** gave the example of adaptation measures for pastoralists affected by slow-onset events such as drought in the Horn of Africa region and the development of the Free Movement of Persons Protocol by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) with specific provision for disaster displaced persons, emphasizing that regional and local solutions are the way forward. **IOM** and **UNHCR** additionally expounded on joint work in the TFD under the UNFCCC and in specific regional contexts including the Pacific and in West Africa/the Sahel.

When asked by the **EU** about upcoming events and opportunities to promote the issue, **IOM** stressed the importance of collaborative operationalization of the Strategy and the upcoming Annual IOM Council. **UNHCR** highlighted the work with UN Country Teams and governments on reducing vulnerabilities. They both stressed the need to scale up existing projects and reach a larger number of affected people with their work on the ground. The **Envoy of the Chair** emphasized that the implementation of global policy frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Global Compacts on Refugees and for Migration, the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda and the recommendations of the TFD, at the regional, national and local levels, along with mobilizing predictable financing are areas for future collaboration.

## **6. AOB**

**France**, as Chair of the PDD, noted that 2020 is an important milestone for global policy processes related to disaster displacement, being five years into the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda. In this context, France announced that alongside the handing over of the PDD Chairmanship to Fiji in January 2021, a commemorative event would be organised to take stock of progress made thus far across these policy areas.

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

End./