

<b>Date:</b>	15 January 2021
<b>Place:</b>	New York (virtual, via Zoom)
<b>Time:</b>	10:00-11:30 EST
<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Eduardo Fernandez-Zincke (European Union) and Majdoline Mouflih (Morocco)
<b>Minutes:</b>	Secretariat, Platform on Disaster Displacement
<b>Attachments:</b>	PowerPoint presentations from the Envoy and the Norwegian Refugee Council

### **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 Fiji, with France as Vice-Chair. The Group of Friends (GoF) of the PDD has been established to increase awareness on the topic of disaster displacement, disseminate information about the PDD and its work and provide tools for engagement with States interested in disaster displacement.

This was the second meeting of the GoF in New York, and the fourth meeting of the GoF to date, following one in New York and two in Geneva. UN Member States and regional organizations were represented through their New York-based Permanent Missions at this virtual meeting, co-chaired by the European Union (EU) and Morocco. This meeting highlighted the links between Disaster Displacement and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and presented the Words into Action Guidelines on integrating disaster displacement in DRR strategies as a tool for implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework). It provided a space for discussion of national and local strategies related to disaster displacement and DRR and underscored the need for stakeholders, in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, to step up their efforts to reduce displacement risk and prevent displacement, strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of persons at risk of displacement, address the protection needs of displaced people and find durable solutions to displacement.

#### **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 primary focus of meeting - linking Disaster Displacement and DRR. **Fiji** was welcomed as newly appointed Chair of the PDD and the three key speakers, from the PDD, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) respectively, were introduced to the GoF.

Deputy Permanent Representative H.E. Agnes Harm, on behalf of **Fiji**, as Chair of the PDD, provided introductory remarks. Five years after the endorsement of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, the adoption of the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement, she called for reflection and critique of the work on disaster displacement done to date. She emphasized Fiji's vulnerability to disasters and the effective practices undertaken in her own country and the Pacific region to overcome it. She emphasized the importance of addressing disaster displacement in DRR strategies in line with Target E or stand-alone

strategies, referring to her country's guidelines on displacement and planned relocation, before assuring the co-chairs and attendees of Fiji's leadership of PDD 2021-2022. COVID-19 provided an opportunity to address disasters in a multidimensional manner and create stronger DRR frameworks to build back better.

## **2. Presentation by the Envoy of the Chair of the PDD**

The **Envoy of the Chair of the PDD, Prof. Walter Kaelin**, presented the PDD's objective to support States and other stakeholders to strengthen the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, and to prevent or reduce disaster displacement risks in countries of origin.

He provided an overview of the [Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change](#) (Protection Agenda), a toolbox to better prevent and prepare for displacement, and to strengthen the protection of displaced persons. He highlighted the central role of DRR within this toolbox and emphasised the role of the Protection Agenda in supporting the integration of effective practices by States and (sub-)regional actors into their own normative frameworks, in accordance with their specific contexts. He then called upon States and other stakeholders to include disaster displacement and human mobility challenges in local, national and regional DRR strategies. He encouraged actors to strengthen efforts to understand disaster and disaster displacement risk, gather displacement data and share effective practices. Finally, he emphasized the need to integrate these strategies with relevant global, regional and national policy frameworks harmonizing robust practises across different policy areas and partners.

## **3. Presentation by UNDRR**

**Marco Toscano-Rivalta, Chief of the New York Liaison Office of UNDRR**, outlined UNDRR's engagement on climate change and disaster displacement in line with the Sendai Framework and cooperating with the PDD. Citing the Sendai Framework as a "blueprint for intervention", he emphasized the need for action on disaster displacement through DRR strategies and the importance of acting across national, regional and international levels, for the purpose of prevention. He underscored the importance of transboundary cooperation and utilizing a systemic approach to address disaster displacement, Human Rights and disaster risk management (DRM).

He then presented UNDRR's current priority areas for DRR and disaster displacement, provided an overview of existing global level frameworks to guide action such as the Sendai Framework, the Protection Agenda, and the Paris Agreement and emphasized the need for their coherent implementation at the regional and national levels. To achieve coherence, DRR strategies should be integrated with humanitarian, development and climate change strategies. Target E of the Sendai Framework being an important instrument to address disaster displacement in DRR, he discussed the importance of sharing and consolidating existing data and knowledge, and fostering coherence between actors, sectors and States in order to translate the Sendai Framework into practical action. He highlighted the close collaboration between UNDRR, PDD, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) but also the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and other actors

from the UN and civil society supporting States to address disaster displacement through data, policy and advocacy work, not least the Words into Action guidelines on disaster displacement.

#### **4. Presentation by NRC**

**Nina Birkeland, Senior Adviser on Disaster Displacement and Climate Change at NRC**, presented the [Words into Action guidelines - Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience](#), a collaboration led by NRC in support of the PDD's Workplan to support States to ensure that future DRR strategies include disaster displacement, as set out in the Sendai Framework. The German Federal Foreign Office, IDMC, PDD, UNDRR, IOM and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were members of the working group developing the first draft, which was then widely consulted before being [launched at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2019](#). The Words into Action (WiA) guidelines offer practical guidance to help practitioners integrate disaster displacement and other related forms of human mobility into regional, national, sub-national and local DRR strategies in accordance with Target E of the Sendai Framework. The guidelines highlight the various roles DRR and DRM can play in reducing, preparing for and responding to disaster displacement, and are publicly accessible on the [UNDRR website](#) in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

After outlining the objectives and structure of the WiA, attention turned toward the States and regional actors currently implementing the WiA, with the support of NRC and the PDD and generously funded by the government of **Germany**. Current projects situated in **South Africa, Mozambique and Nepal**, the Andean region (with the Andean Committee for Disaster Reduction and Response, **CAPRADE**), the Central American region (with the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, **CEPRENAC**) and the Horn of Africa (**IGAD**) were showcased, stressing the WiA's primary intention to provide support to governments, share technical knowledge and create action through participatory and collaborative practises. The presentation concluded with the announcement of the **WiA Checklist** to be made publicly available in early 2021, aimed at facilitating practical and effective guidance for DRR policy makers and practitioners when assessing whether their policies, strategies and practices align with the Sendai Framework's guidance on disaster displacement. Based on the WiA guidelines, the Checklist identifies and proposes a number of possible actions to be taken at national and local levels, as well as to promote a regionally coherent approach. In addition, an **e-learning** course in English, French and Spanish will be available early 2021, and in Arabic in late 2021. NRC welcomes dialogue with States or regions interested in the WiA guidelines and invites them to get in touch through the PDD Secretariat.

#### **5. Questions and Answers**

A number of States including **France, Germany and Switzerland** voiced their support and gratitude to all panelists and organizations involved, emphasizing their desire to continue developing dialogue centered on DRR and disaster displacement. **France** then invited all delegations through their Geneva based missions to a Commemoration event marking the 5th anniversary of the endorsement of the Protection Agenda, and the adoption of the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement which they are organizing jointly with Fiji on 4 February 2021, from 09:00-13:00 CET.

**El Salvador** and the **Dominican Republic** expressed strong interest in the WiA guidelines and e-learning instrument stressing the importance of making such resources available and accessible to all, from governmental to grassroots organizations. They further emphasized the importance of maintaining close and collaborative relationships between regional, national, sub-national and local DRM actors. In Response, **NRC** outlined the collaborative operationalization of the WiA guidelines, in particular the development of the e-learning instrument in close collaboration with **CEPREDENAC**. The WiA guidelines are publically accessible on the [UNDRR website](#) in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Countries interested in translating the document into further languages are invited to do so in collaboration with NRC and can contact the PDD Secretariat.

**Tuvalu** expressed their interest in opening dialogue centred on a “preventative agenda” to proactively reduce disaster risks. The extreme vulnerability of the Pacific region, alongside limited access to finances, underscores the importance of regional level initiatives to build the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities. Fiji’s initiative to develop guidelines on [planned relocation](#) as well as [displacement in the context of climate change and disasters](#) and the [Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement](#) were mentioned as important tools already in use in the Pacific region to ensure better protection for communities in these contexts. The **Envoy of the Chair** underscored the relevance of the Protection Agenda in this context, specifically [Part 2: Managing Disaster Displacement Risk in the Countries of Origin](#), and the PDD’s strong advocacy for proactive DRR, in-situ climate change adaptation and community resilience building. **UNDRR** further consolidated this by expounding on joint work done with the PDD and also UNHCR and IOM, focused on strengthening a preventative approach to disaster displacement within specific regional contexts including the generation and dissemination of knowledge and the development of DRR financing strategies and instruments as areas for future collaboration.

## 6. AOB

The Envoy of the Chair, noted that 2021 is an important milestone for global policy processes related to disaster displacement, marking the five year commemoration of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Protection Agenda. In this context, he restated the open **invitation to the the Commemoration event** co-chaired by the PDD Chair and Vice-Chair France and Fiji on 4 February 2021.

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

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*The following States and regional organizations participated in this meeting: Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Tuvalu, United States of America, and Zambia.*