



PDD Policy Brief and Key Messages

“Disaster Displacement and Disaster Risk Reduction”

to inform the 2021 Africa Regional Platform for DRR, Arab Regional Platform for DRR, European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction and Regional Platform for DRR in the Americas and the Caribbean, the 2022 Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR as applicable, and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Bali, Indonesia, 23-28 May 2022

Disasters affect people in different ways. One of them is displacement...

Millions of people are displaced in the context of disasters around the world, every year. In 2020 alone, 30.7 million new displacements were related to disasters, according to estimates by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. **Disaster displacement** is multi-causal and driven by political, social, demographic, and environmental factors, including land degradation and unsustainable urbanization, among others. It occurs in the context of earthquakes and other geophysical hazards or is linked to extreme weather events, such as floods, storms and drought. Weather-related events were responsible for 98 per cent of all disaster displacement recorded in 2020.

The adverse effects of **climate change** are already increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards and undermining resilience. Climate change has contributed to almost a doubling of disaster events over the past two decades. As more people become exposed and are vulnerable to the impacts of such hazards, disaster displacement risk is likely to continue to increase. The World Bank projects that climate change could further force more than 216 million people to move within their own countries by 2050, but that this number can be significantly reduced through immediate and concrete climate and development action.

...which has devastating impacts on individuals and communities, especially the most vulnerable.

Moving people away from risk areas can save lives, for example through pre-emptive **evacuation**. However, disaster displacement can have devastating social, economic, health and psychological impacts on individuals and communities, and it affects the effective enjoyment of their human rights. By exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities, disaster displacement severely affects children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, traditional communities and people already marginalized. Vulnerabilities of disaster displaced persons may in turn be exacerbated by other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity and increasing water scarcity.

Disaster displacement raises multiple protection concerns, undermines development gains, affects human rights and potentially human security, with disproportionate impacts on people in least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030...

The Sendai Framework outlines seven targets for action to prevent and reduce disaster risk. It recognizes disaster displacement as an important concern for people-centred disaster risk reduction (DRR) and provides many opportunities for DRR policy and practice to reduce risk and address displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. In particular:

Target B of the Sendai Framework aims to “substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030”, which includes those who have been injured, suffered damage to their livelihoods or “who were evacuated, displaced, and relocated.”

Reaching **Target E** of the Sendai Framework can contribute to this goal. It aims to “substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020,” and it is critical that countries include provisions to address human mobility challenges in disaster and climate change contexts in their DRR strategies.

Risk assessment and planning is critical to reduce risk and address displacement. **Target G** aims to “substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments by 2030”. Achieving Target G will enable better preparedness and the effective use of measures such as pre-emptive evacuations to save lives.

National and regional DRR strategies and practice

DRR strategies and practice play an important role in preventing and reducing risks associated with disaster displacement, strengthening resilience, and addressing the protection needs of people already displaced or at risk of being displaced. They should promote human-rights based approaches to disaster displacement and build coherence and partnerships across related policy areas, contributing to an effective use of knowledge and resources across silos. Furthermore, the inclusion and meaningful participation of people at risk of displacement and those already displaced, in planning and response, is essential to ensure durable solutions to their displacement and to avoid the creation of further risk. Inclusion and participation is essential at all times, before, during and after displacement, with due attention to age, gender and diversity considerations.

There exist many initiatives and effective practices at the national and regional levels that can be shared between actors to learn from each other. Noteworthy examples of policy development in recent years include:

Bangladesh: National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management (2021)

Fiji: Displacement Guidelines – In the Context of Climate Change and Disasters (2020)

Fiji: Planned Relocation Guidelines – A framework to undertake climate change related relocation (2018)

Vanuatu: National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement (2018)

The Nansen Initiative *Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change* compiled several recommendations on how to strengthen the management of disaster displacement risk. Building on this work and through close partnerships, PDD, UNDRR, the Norwegian Refugee Council and others, have

a) Mapped national and regional DRR strategies, analyzing the extent to which they include disaster displacement and human mobility provisions (Yonetani, M. 2018), including with a specific focus on the IGAD region (Nyandiko, N. & Freeman, R. 2020).

b) Developed Words into Action Guidelines that support States to include disaster displacement provisions in their DRR policies and strategies (UNDRR, 2019), as well as a supporting Checklist (NRC, 2020) and eLearning.

c) Taken stock of available disaster displacement data gaps, challenges and opportunities (IDMC, 2019); and are developing a set of recommendations for recording the scale of displacement at national level and assessing impacts and future risk which will incorporate the use of both scientific research techniques and community risk assessment methods.

d) Mapped the use of planned relocation to establish an evidence base on planned relocation cases and offer insights for policy and practice on characteristics, approaches to implementation and associated challenges of planned relocation as a risk reduction measure (Bower, E. & Weerasinghe, S. 2021).

Addressing disaster displacement in a coherent manner across relevant policy areas

Effective approaches to addressing disaster displacement through the Sendai Framework will require coherence with and partnerships across related policy areas, including

The UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement...

The need to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change is recognized as a priority by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement. It is addressed in particular through the work of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

The Global Compact for Migration...

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) acknowledges the importance of DRR in minimizing the drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation.

Objective 2 of the GCM aims to, *inter alia*, “integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies and promote cooperation with neighbouring and other relevant countries to prepare for early warning, contingency planning, stockpiling, coordination mechanisms, evacuation planning, reception and assistance arrangements, and public information”.

... and many others!

Disaster displacement is also recognized as a key human rights, humanitarian and development challenge by the Human Rights Council, Human Rights Treaty Bodies, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity, the New Urban Agenda, and the Global Compact on Refugees.

To reduce and minimize risks related to displacement and to achieve better outcomes for disaster displaced persons worldwide, **it is important for these global agendas and frameworks to guide regional and national policies in a coherent manner, and give support to action at the local level.**

Governments should **include displacement in their national DRR targets and indicators** to measure their progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, and ensure these are aligned with sustainable development and climate change planning processes and reporting.

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Key messages and proposed commitments for the Regional Platforms 2021 and Global Platform for DRR 2022

Member States and other stakeholders are encouraged to use their **official statements** as well as **interventions in relevant plenary sessions such as high-level dialogues and thematic sessions or side events** to promote these **key messages for inclusion in outcomes of the Platforms**.

Disasters affect people in many ways. Disaster displacement is one of them. Except where it saves lives, such as in evacuations, States and other stakeholders should ensure that their efforts in implementing the Sendai Framework **assess and reduce displacement risk and prevent displacement**. These efforts should be coherent with wider human rights, humanitarian, development, climate action and human mobility efforts to **strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity** of people at risk of displacement, **address the protection needs** of displaced people and find **durable solutions** to displacement.

States and other stakeholders are called upon to:

1. Include provisions to address disaster displacement and other forms of human mobility in a coherent way in local, national and regional DRR policies and strategies.
2. Work across silos and strengthen governance to foster the effective and coherent implementation of these policies and strategies in line with relevant global, regional and national policy frameworks and strategies on climate change action, development, humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management and refugee protection, among others.
3. Strengthen efforts to understand risks related to disaster displacement, collect disaggregated displacement data, and to use such information when reporting on and monitoring implementation of progress and when developing contingency, preparedness and response plans.
4. Build the capacity of local, national and regional stakeholders to address disaster displacement through the application of effective practices and existing learning, and ensure the allocation of funding, including at the local level.
5. Ensure the inclusion and meaningful participation of people and groups displaced or at risk of displacement in both planning and response, with due attention to age, gender and diversity considerations.

Commitments for States and other actors, for the upcoming Regional Platforms for DRR and GP2022

Member States are encouraged to express the following commitments in their official statements and interventions in relevant sessions:

- A. **Strengthen governance** of disaster displacement i.a. through the following actions:
 - i. **Update or develop local, national and regional DRR strategies and policies** with provisions on disaster displacement and human mobility, building on efforts made to achieve Target E.
 - ii. Ensure that **national DRR policies and strategies are coherent** with policies and strategies on climate change action, development, humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management, refugee protection, etc.
 - iii. **Implement the Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster Displacement**, use the accompanying Checklist, and build capacity through the eLearning course and other training.
 - iv. **Designate a governmental focal point** on disaster displacement to facilitate information-sharing and, as relevant, coordination within and across ministries, between the local and national level, and with civil society, affected communities and other partners.
 - v. **Allocate funding** and ensure appropriate human resources, for the implementation of these measures as well as capacity building and training, including at the local level.
 - vi. Scale up the **application and sharing of effective practices and learning, including the use of risk assessments, early warning systems and other preparedness measures**, to ensure that disaster displacement is addressed and related risk is reduced, in line with the Sendai Framework.

- B. **Improve the evidence base** on disaster displacement by:
 - i. improving **disaster displacement data collection, including through disaggregating data and by monitoring all stages of displacement** in line with data protection standards; and
 - ii. developing **national targets and indicators** on new and existing disaster displacement, for national reporting and to the Sendai Framework Monitor, in line with the SDGs; and
 - iii. **enhancing access to data and evidence** on disaster displacement risk and on other forms of human mobility, including through the development of disaster displacement risk models.

Documents to consult

[Bower, E., Weerasinghe, S. 2021. Leaving Place, Restoring Home: Enhancing the evidence base on planned relocation cases in the context of hazards, disasters and climate change.](#)

[GNDR, 2021. Views from the Frontline: Perspectives of the Displaced. Summary of data.](#)

[Human Rights Council, 2017. Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 22 June 2017 35/20. Human rights and climate change.](#)

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Nyandiko, N., Freeman, R. 2020. Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Development Policies, and their Consideration of Disaster Displacement and Human Mobility in the IGAD Region.

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UNFCCC, 2018. Recommendations from the report of the ExCom of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts on integrated approaches to averting, minimizing and addressing displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.

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UNDRR, 2021. Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action 2.0.

Weerasinghe, S. 2021. Weathering the Storms: COVID-19, Disasters and Internal Displacement in the Asia Pacific in 2020. UNDRR and IOM.

World Bank, 2021. Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration.

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?

About the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)

The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) is a State-led initiative. Its objective is 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. After Germany, Bangladesh and France, Fiji currently chairs the PDD and will hand over the Chairmanship to the European Union in July 2022. The PDD works across human mobility, DRR, climate change, humanitarian, development, human rights and other policy areas to support States and other stakeholders in implementing the **Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda**, which was endorsed by more than 100 governmental delegations during a Global Consultation in October 2015.

The **PDD 2019 - 2022 Strategy and Workplan** include a whole set of activities focusing on DRR and the reduction of displacement risks at the international and regional levels. Its Strategic Priorities are to (i) support integrated implementation of global policy frameworks on human mobility, climate change action and disaster risk reduction that are relevant for disaster displaced persons; (ii) promote policy and normative development to address gaps in the protection of persons at risk of displacement or displaced across borders; (iii) facilitate exchange of knowledge and strengthen capacity at the national and regional levels to implement effective practices and instruments that can prevent, reduce and address disaster displacement; (iv) strengthen evidence and data on disaster displacement and its impacts.

The **PDD Steering Group** is comprised of the following members: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Fiji (Chair), France (Vice-Chair), Germany, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Senegal, Switzerland, and the European Union. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are standing invitees. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is a member ex officio, hosting the PDD Secretariat.

The **PDD Advisory Committee** gathers experts of international and regional organizations, research institutions, academia, private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders from the fields of humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management, refugee protection, disaster risk reduction, climate change action and development. Advisory Committee Members that have provided input to this policy brief include IOM, UNHCR, UNDRR, OHCHR as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam South Africa, American Red Cross, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA), the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), and a number of independent experts.