

## Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) Strategy 2019-2023

### 1. Introduction

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The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) was established in July 2016 as a state-led initiative<sup>1</sup> to follow-up on the work of the Nansen Initiative<sup>2</sup> and to support States and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change* (Protection Agenda)<sup>3</sup> which was endorsed by 109 States in October 2015.

This Strategy 2019-2023 succeeds the PDD Strategy 2016-2019. This Strategy outlines PDD's purpose and defines its strategic priorities, setup and working methods for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2023.

The Strategy will be revised, updated if/when appropriate, and approved by the Steering Group of the Platform. An overview of the expected outcomes and outputs and a PDD Workplan (2019-2023) are annexes to this Strategy, and may be updated regularly. Together, this Strategy and its Annexes form the PDD Strategic Framework 2019-2023.

### 2. The Platform on Disaster Displacement: Purpose and Scope of Work

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Forced displacement in the context of disasters,<sup>4</sup> including from the adverse effects of climate change (disaster displacement<sup>5</sup>), is a reality and among the biggest humanitarian and development challenges facing States and the international community in the 21st century. PDD promotes a comprehensive approach to cross-border disaster-displacement. Its **VISION** is a world in which “no one will be left behind”, in accordance with the aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://disasterdisplacement.org/about-us/the-steering-group>, for an overview of members of the PDD Steering Group.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.nanseninitiative.org/>

<sup>3</sup> The Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda is available at [https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN\\_Protection\\_Agenda\\_Volume\\_I\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN_Protection_Agenda_Volume_I_low_res.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> See the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, paragraph 15, for a definition of the term ‘disaster’: “The term ‘disaster’ refers to a “serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources” (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – UNISDR). For the purpose of this strategy, disasters refer to disruptions triggered by or linked to hydro-metrological and climatological natural hazards, including hazards linked to anthropogenic global warming, as well as geophysical hazards. The scope of this strategy covers the effects of both sudden-onset and slow-onset hazards (and where they combine) including, in particular, those linked to the adverse effects of climate change. The relevant distinction is not the character of the disaster, but rather whether it triggers displacement, understood as the (primarily) forced movement of persons as opposed to (primarily) voluntary migration.”

<sup>5</sup> According to the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, paragraph 16, “The term ‘disaster displacement’ refers to situations where people are forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard. Such displacement results from the fact that affected persons are (i) exposed to (ii) a natural hazard in a situation where (iii) they are too vulnerable and lack the resilience to withstand the impacts of that hazard. It is the effects of natural hazards, including the adverse impacts of climate change that may overwhelm the resilience or adaptive capacity of an affected community or society, thus leading to a disaster that potentially results in displacement.”

Development, disaster displaced persons are protected and persons at risk of disaster displacement are provided with measures helping them to stay or move safely out of harm's way.

Building on the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, PDD seeks to:

- promote measures to address the **protection<sup>6</sup> and assistance needs of persons displaced across borders** in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change including making use of instruments such as humanitarian visas, temporary protection measures and other effective practices that States can use to provide humanitarian protection to cross-border disaster-displaced persons.
- promote measures to **manage displacement risks** in countries of origin, in particular effective practices helping people at risk of disaster displacement (i) to stay in their homes and avoid displacement through disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience building measures etc.; (ii) to move out of harm's way in a dignified manner, through the creation of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration, and planned relocation as a measure of last resort, in situations of extreme environmental degradation and heightened risk of disaster displacement. Since most disaster displacement takes place within countries, PDD (iii) also seizes opportunities, as/when appropriate, for global advocacy for enhanced protection of persons who, in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, are internally displaced (IDPs).

Building on the work of the Nansen Initiative and achievements reached under the PDD Strategy and Workplan 2016-2019, the Steering Group of PDD has decided to continue the work of PDD beyond June 2019, with the following overall **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.*

In support of meeting this overall objective, PDD will address the following four strategic priorities for the period 2019-2023:

- 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.

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<sup>6</sup> The Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda (NIPA), paragraph 14, defines "protection" as "referring to any positive action, whether or not based on legal obligations, undertaken by States on behalf of disaster displaced persons or persons at risk of being displaced that aim at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of applicable bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law." While highlighting the humanitarian nature of such protection, the agenda does not aim to expand States' legal obligations under international refugee and human rights law for cross-border disaster-displaced persons and persons at risk of being displaced.

While being a state-led process, the key working principles of PDD continue to be multi-stakeholder involvement, strategic engagement with existing coordination mechanisms, and strong partnerships between policymakers, practitioners and researchers in order to work towards collective outcomes. In this sense, the PDD also aims to be a hub for dialogue and information sharing and a catalyst for research and analysis, working with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other operational partners having a key role in supporting and complementing State efforts to implement activities aimed at preventing, reducing and addressing disaster displacement.

### **3. Strategic Priorities for Action 2019 – 2023**

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#### 3.1 Support integrated implementation of global policy frameworks on human mobility, climate change action and disaster risk reduction that are relevant for disaster displaced persons.

Compared to 2012 when the Nansen Initiative was launched, there is now widespread recognition of disaster displacement as a protection challenge in the international community. Since then, important progress regarding global policy development on disaster displacement has been made in global, regional and national policy processes on disaster risk reduction, climate change, migration and displacement, human rights and humanitarian action, in particular. The important role of PDD and the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda has been repeatedly recognized by the international community.<sup>7</sup>

Drawing on these achievements, PDD prioritizes three global policy frameworks for engagement under the current Strategy, namely:

- (i) the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and, following from it, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR);
- (ii) the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework);
- (iii) the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other outcomes of subsidiary bodies of UNFCCC, including the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) and its Task Force on Displacement (TFD).

Between 2019 and 2023, PDD aims to build on, and sharpen its profile as a recognized voice on the topic of disaster displacement and the associated protection needs of disaster displaced populations in the above three policy areas. PDD aims to become a strong advocate for the inclusion of this topic in review and follow-up processes, such as the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the Conference of the Parties under UNFCCC (COPs) and the Global Platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction (GPs), as well as regional events linked to these global processes.

The state-led character of PDD allows for targeted and coordinated global advocacy on disaster displacement to ensure that global and regional commitments to prevent, reduce and address disaster displacement remain high on the international agenda, in a context of broad and ambitious goals and competing priorities. PDD will continue to support such advocacy efforts with partners and

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<sup>7</sup> See, in particular, GCM, para 18(i), New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and para 50, Human Rights Council Resolution HRC 35/20 (preambular paragraphs).

seek to ensure that commitments are followed through with support, resources and access to policy instruments for States seeking to implement these commitments.

PDD will seek, in close partnership and coordination with relevant stakeholders, to keep track of implementation of benchmarks, pledges, targets, objectives and commitments relevant for disaster displacement in these policy frameworks and engage in, and support relevant review, monitoring and stocktaking mechanisms, as appropriate.

Responding to the challenges of disaster displacement and other types of human mobility in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change (e.g. planned relocation and migration as adaptation) requires integrated approaches that address the drivers as well as the consequences and protection needs of such human mobility<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, PDD will continue to promote policy coherence and support the implementation of integrated approaches across these policy and action areas. Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction as well as other humanitarian and development efforts are often interdependent. Promoting a coherent approach in implementing these efforts will generate more effective outcomes and may strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of countries and communities (e.g. development of integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies and plans addressing human mobility challenges, at the national level)<sup>9</sup>.

PDD will also engage with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and other global and regional migration and displacement policy dialogues (e.g. IOM's International Dialogue on Migration, UNHCR's annual High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges and Regional Consultative Processes - RCPs) on migration), to promote policy dialogues on the protection challenges of disaster displacement and seize them as opportunities for dialogues on further policy development.

PDD recognizes the important role played by regional and sub-regional organizations and forums in addressing disaster displacement and will continue to, and expand its strategic coordination with these actors and fora, seizing opportunities for joint action in relevant policy areas under the leadership of PDD Steering Group members and other States<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> In Accordance with the NIPA and Paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework, PDD and this strategy uses the term 'human mobility' to refer to three forms of movement namely displacement (understood as the primarily *forced* movement of persons), migration (understood as the primarily *voluntary* movement of persons) and planned relocation (understood as planned process of settling persons or groups of persons to a new location). Cf. paragraph 20-21 NIPA.

<sup>9</sup> Integrated approaches also require a human rights-based approach and integration of human mobility challenges in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change into policy areas such as humanitarian assistance and protection (and the implementation of the Agenda for Humanity), Development (and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals), and the environment. Thus, PDD as one of few actors working systematically across a wide range of relevant policy and actions areas at the global level, will also promote policy coherence and to strengthen the goal of collective outcomes between and across a wider range of global policy frameworks. These efforts will be led by PDD Steering Group Members as thematic champions.

<sup>10</sup> Some regional organizations with whom the Nansen Initiative and PDD have already engaged are the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in the Pacific, the Central American Integration System (SICA) in Central America, MERCOSUR in South America, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Greater Horn of Africa region, The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Southern Africa, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Southeast Asia, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in South Asia and the European Union (EU) in Europe.

### 3.2 Promote policy and normative development to address gaps in the protection of persons at risk of displacement or displaced across borders.

PDD recognizes that international law lacks provisions that explicitly address the protection of persons displaced or compelled to move across international borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change (e.g. on admission, standards during stay and on conditions for return). PDD further recognizes the need for guidance on the application of existing international standards and norms that may be relevant for such situations. Finally, it acknowledges that the protection gap is often a result of insufficient guidance and implementation of existing standards and legal instruments.

In line with the recommendations by the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda and the approach taken by PDD so far, PDD will not advocate for the development of new legally binding standards and legal instruments for admission and stay of cross-border disaster-displaced persons at the global level, but rather, it will promote better implementation of existing standards and legal instruments. At the same time, it will support ongoing and promote future standard-setting activities at the national and regional levels in line with the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda.

### 3.3 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.

PDD will seek to support the implementation of effective practices and instruments at the national and regional level by facilitating exchange among governments and other stakeholders and by promoting the use of effective practices and instruments that can address the protection and assistance needs of people who have been displaced across borders (**Humanitarian Protection Measures**)<sup>11</sup>. This includes promoting practices referenced in the GCM (Subparagraphs 21g-h), the GCR (notably Paragraph 63) and through established State practices identified as effective practices in the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda.

PDD will further promote the use of effective practices to prevent and reduce displacement through measures that reduce disaster and displacement risk, enhance the adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change, strengthen resilience and facilitate movement out of harm's way (**Managing Disaster Displacement Risk**). This includes supporting States and promoting efforts to integrate human mobility challenges into national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies and plans, and to promote their strategic combination and integration where possible.

To support this Strategic Priority, PDD will provide advice and guidance, technical support, workshops and capacity building or organize binational or regional knowledge exchange workshops on effective practices, simulation exercises etc., upon request and in close cooperation with States, partners and existing coordination mechanisms.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the NIPA, paragraph 19, "Humanitarian protection measures" refer to the laws, policies and practices used by States to permit the admission and stay of cross-border disaster-displaced persons on their territory. These humanitarian protection measures are generally temporary, and may be based on regular immigration law, exceptional immigration categories, or provisions related to the protection of refugees or similar norms of international human rights law.

### 3.4 Strengthen evidence and data on disaster displacement and its impacts

Despite important strides on collecting data on disaster displacement supported by the work of the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division as well as the World Bank in particular, global comprehensive and systematic data collection and analysis on internal and cross-border disaster-displacement is still wanting<sup>12</sup>.

The data challenge at the global level regarding disaster displacement is conceptual, technical, operational and institutional. There is evidence and data gaps for all types of forced displacement and forced population movements, which is unlikely to be addressed in the short-term by existing data collection and analysis providers and researchers.

Thus, the PDD will continue its work under this Strategy, notably through its Advisory Committee's Data and Knowledge Working Group (DKWG), seeking to enhance coordination, harmonization and information sharing on new and relevant research and scientific approaches, models, tools, and methodologies for strengthening evidence and data on disaster displacement and its impacts. PDD will also work with partners and it will support efforts to address data gaps and challenges identified in a global review and stocktaking of disaster displacement data collection approaches and systems, commissioned by PDD under the previous PDD Strategy 2016-2019<sup>13</sup>. This will be complemented by targeted research and analysis in support of PDD's advocacy and policy objectives, and in support of implementation of global policy frameworks<sup>14</sup>, commissioned to members of its Advisory Committee or conducted in partnership with others.

## **4. Enabling the Strategy**

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### **4.1 Through the PDD governance structure**

The implementation of the Strategy is guided by the governing structure of PDD<sup>15</sup>. PDD will continue to be led by a **Steering Group** comprised of States and the European Union (EU). IOM and UNHCR remain Standing Invitees to the Steering Group as well as the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as member ex officio, hosting the PDD Secretariat.

The Steering Group and its Chair and Vice-Chair provide overall strategic leadership and guidance on priorities, policy recommendations and advocacy. Steering Group members commit to being thematic or regional champions for specific aspects of the work of the PDD.

The Steering Group will continue to meet in regular Steering Group Meetings in Geneva, as well as thematic, regional or other **Working Groups** called for by the Chair, to work on specific priorities.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, there are global estimates which indicate that the phenomenon of disaster displacement is significant, that most displacement is internal and that the majority is displaced in the context of weather related hazards, but global data only covers the incidence of displacement, and not where displaced people flee to or where they eventually settle or return (e.g. instances of cross-border disaster-displacement). Furthermore, figures on disaster displacement ('stocks') are not comprehensive and existing global estimates, while indicative of overall trends, do often not include all small scale displacements. In general, knowledge on displacement dynamics (scale, drivers, trends, protection impact and solutions) in disaster and climate change contexts is often insufficient or lacking, in particular regarding dynamics in the context of slow-onset natural hazard events associated with the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

<sup>13</sup> See IDMC, 2019 (Forthcoming): Disaster Displacement – a global review. Will be available from <http://www.internal-displacement.org>.

<sup>14</sup> See GCM, objective 1, sub-para. 17 a-k and objective 2 sub-para. 18h; GCR, para. 45-48; recommendations on data collection from the WIM TFD (para. 1f (ii)) and relevant provisions on risk data in the Sendai Framework (e.g. paras 19 g, 24a, 25a).

<sup>15</sup> This document is to be read alongside four sets of Terms of References (ToRs) of the Platform: 1) Steering Group, 2) Advisory Committee 3) Secretariat, and 4) Group of Friends, available at [www.disasterdisplacement.org](http://www.disasterdisplacement.org)

The **Envoy of the Chair** will continue to provide strategic advice to the Chair and the Steering Group, and may represent the Chair in high-level public events.

Under this strategy, 2019-2023, a **Group of Friends** will be established to promote further outreach among States interested in supporting the work of PDD. The group will strengthen awareness regarding the protection needs and challenges of disaster displacement and disseminate information about PDD's work to a larger audience. The Group of Friends will be chaired by members of the PDD Steering Group.

To support the coordination of work between different members and partners of the Platform, and to support the Chair and the Steering Group to achieve the Strategic Priorities and implement the PDD Strategic Framework, the Coordination Unit will continue in the form of a **Secretariat** and provide policy, research, administrative, coordination, communication and other types of technical assistance. The Secretariat reports to the Chair of PDD. The work of the Secretariat will be supported by PDD Regional Advisers where applicable.

The PDD **Advisory Committee**, consisting of individuals and representatives of international and regional organizations, research institutions, academia, private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders will continue to provide expert input and strategic advice to the Steering Group and the Chair of the Platform, and, as applicable and appropriate, support the implementation of activities in the Workplan. The Advisory Committee meets approximately once a year. The Advisory Committee is considered a critical factor for the success and progress of work for PDD, as a forum for exchange and sharing of research and knowledge and for global and regional advocacy. Under this Strategy 2019-2023, PDD will aim to find ways to improve communication, coordination and 'intersessional' work among Advisory Committee members.

The Platform is comprised of a multitude of actors with different roles and responsibilities. Steering Group members and Advisory Committee members may organize and lead PDD activities, supported by the Secretariat, and in cooperation with other partners.

#### **4.2 Through strong partnerships with IOM, UNHCR, UNOPS and NRC**

As a state-led initiative with multi-stakeholder engagement, PDD recognizes the central role played by **IOM and UNHCR** in implementing the PDD Strategy 2016-2019 and in supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda. Significant strides have been made by both organizations regarding institutionalizing disaster displacement in their respective structures, strategic directions and governing bodies. IOM and UNHCR have a key role to play in supporting and complementing State efforts and implementing activities aimed at preventing, reducing and addressing disaster displacement. Under this Strategy 2019-2023, PDD will continue to seek institutional arrangements for coordination and collaboration and support the institutional capacity of IOM and UNHCR to address disaster displacement.

PDD welcomes the commitment of IOM and UNHCR Principals to work in active partnership with PDD in *'the area of climate change and disaster displacement'*<sup>16</sup>. PDD will support IOM and UNHCR in their respective roles and mandates in the implementation of the two Global Compacts. PDD will also, in cooperation with IOM and UNHCR, continue its efforts to institutionalize responsibilities for disaster displacement within the United Nations System and relevant bodies and agencies,

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<sup>16</sup> Joint letter IOM and UNHCR, dated 25 January 2019.

recognizing the cross-cutting nature of this topic and the overall functional capacity present in the UN system to support States in preventing, reducing and addressing disaster displacement.

PDD will continue to use the hosting services of UNOPS for its Secretariat and the administration of financial contributions to its Workplan implementation. PDD will further continue to work with NRC on project implementation and programme and grant management including the secondment of Regional Advisers, where applicable, and it will seek new strategic partnership where appropriate.

#### **4.3 Through communication**

Under the 2019-2023 Strategy, a PDD **communication strategy** will be developed to complement and support the implementation of this Strategy. PDD will strengthen its capacity to provide visibility and awareness regarding disaster displacement and to support advocacy efforts based on effective messaging, including in languages other than English.

#### **4.4 Through funding of activities**

The activities required to support the work of the Platform and implement the Strategic Framework 2019-2023 will be funded by various **funding mechanisms**. PDD will have decentralized funding mechanisms for project and programme related activities, whereas core funding is required to cover the infrastructure and operating costs of the Secretariat. Secondments, additional staff, research and programme/project activities will primarily be channeled through and mainstreamed into the activities of operational agencies. 'Letters of Intent' will be developed with relevant operational partners to ensure a more predictable governance and management of such funds.

During the Strategy 2019-2023, PDD seeks to further diversify its funding base. A specific priority for this Strategy is to advocate for multi-year and cross-sectoral funding for programs and projects at the national and regional level, and to enlarge its donor base. A specific fundraising strategy will be developed to that end.

### **5. Annexes**

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Annex I: PDD Workplan (2019-2023)

Annex II: Logical Framework on Outcomes and Outputs