PLANNED RELOCATIONS, DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: CONSOLIDATING GOOD PRACTICES AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT
SANREMO CONSULTATION, 12-14 MARCH 2014
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Disclaimer: responsibility for the information and views set out in this document lies entirely with the authors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................................................5
2. WHY A FOCUS ON PLANNED RELOCATIONS? ........................................................................................................................................................................5
3. A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE APPROACHED THUS FAR FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ...............................................................6
4. WHY IS PLANNED RELOCATION AN IMPORTANT ISSUE? ..........................................................................................................7
5. WHO MIGHT BE IN NEED OF PLANNED RELOCATIONS? ............................................................................................................7
6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND RELOCATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL ......................................................................................................7
7. THE PESKY ISSUE OF DEFINITIONS ..........................................................................................................................................8
8. WHERE IS PLANNED RELOCATION EXPECTED TO OCCUR? ......................................................................................................8
9. SOME OF THE LESSONS LEARNED THUS FAR ..........................................................................................................................9
   a. Evacuations .......................................................................................................................................................................................9
   b. Development-forced displacement and resettlement (DFDR) .............................................................................................................9
10. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT EVACUATIONS? ..............................................................................................................................11
11. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OTHER EXPERIENCES WITH LONG-TERM PLANNED RELOCATIONS? .......................................13
12. HOW DOES PLANNED RELOCATION RELATE TO PLANNING FOR AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE? .........................14
13. MOVING FORWARD ...............................................................................................................................................................14
14. GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING ...................................................................................................................................................15
1. INTRODUCTION

This background paper has been prepared to underpin discussions at the Sanremo consultation on planned relocations, disasters and climate change. Consolidating good practices and preparing for the future, to be held from 12-14 March 2014. This UNHCR-Brookings-Georgetown consultation, supported with a grant from the European Union and co-financing from Norway and Switzerland, will provide an opportunity to examine the complex issue of planned relocations made necessary by sudden-onset disasters, acute environmental degradation, and the longer-term effects of climate change.

The consultation will contribute to the Nansen Initiative on disaster-induced cross-border displacement, a bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on the development of a protection agenda to address the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of natural disasters, including those linked to the effects of climate change.

Although a relatively uncharted topic in the context of climate change, this paper – and the consultation – takes as a starting point the likelihood that States will increasingly use planned relocation as a tool to move populations out of harm’s way and that guidance is needed to support this process. States and those seeking to support them as well as affected communities could benefit from such guidance since past experiences with planned relocations in other contexts have generally been less than ideal.

The particular form this guidance should take will be a primary focus of discussion at the Sanremo consultation. Fortunately, this process is not starting from scratch. Over the past three years there have been efforts to address the issue of planned relocations made necessary by the effects of natural hazards related to climate change. Previous consultations in 2010 and 2011 at Bellagio1 have identified some of the lessons learned from other relocation efforts. A process is underway to provide guidance in the case of evacuations made necessary by sudden-onset disasters2 and a UNHCR paper published in 2012 suggests a framework of ‘preliminary understandings’3 to uphold the rights of those relocated as a consequence of climate change.4 The Peninsula Principles5 provide additional guidance as do safeguard policies developed by the World Bank6 and contained in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.7

The consultation’s participants in Sanremo – representatives of States, international organizations, academics, experts and civil society representatives – are expected to identify gaps in existing knowledge, laws and policies that need to be filled as well as decide how best to articulate the guidance that is needed.

2. WHY A FOCUS ON PLANNED RELOCATIONS?

From the very first report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there has been a recognition that one of the effects of climate change will be on the mobility of people. In COP 16, human mobility was formally recognized as a form of adaptation to the effects of climate change with reference to migration, displacement and planned relocations.8 While migration and displacement have both received a fair amount of attention,9 there has been little academic or policy work done on the issue of planned relocations in the context of climate change.

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2 The International Organization for Migration is leading a process to develop Comprehensive Guidelines for Mass Evacuations in the Event of Natural Disasters, known as the MEND project. A draft document has been circulated and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2014.


This is relatively uncharted territory. While there is a substantial body of literature on development-induced displacement, on displacement caused by conflict and human rights violations, and a growing body of guidance and law on disasters, addressing the issue of planned relocations in the context of climate change requires people to step outside their comfort zones and to think in different ways.

There is also an undercurrent of resistance to considering issues of planned relocations now out of a concern that doing so would take pressure off national and international actors to implement mitigation measures which would make it possible for people to remain in their homes and communities. It is too early to talk about relocations, this argument goes, as people have a basic right to remain where they are and the international community should be going full-out to mitigate the effects of climate change. The climate change community seems to be moving towards emphasizing the importance of both adaptation and mitigation measures, arguing that these are not mutually exclusive options.

This paper, and indeed this consultation, is based on the assumption that thinking, talking and planning for relocations does not mean that such relocations are a forgone conclusion, but rather represent the prudent exercise of responsibility. Just as planning for response to an industrial accident doesn’t make an industrial accident more likely, so too planning for relocations should not make them more likely, but instead should mean that if they are needed at some point in the future, they will be carried out in a way that respects human rights and that builds on the experience and good practices of other efforts.

### 3. A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE APPROACHED THUS FAR FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Although there are several bodies of academic and policy work which are relevant to this discussion and which are discussed in detail below, the issue has been approached from different vantage points and often using different vocabulary.

For example, for humanitarian actors, the term ‘resettlement’ is almost always associated with refugee resettlement to third countries while for those working in development-forced displacement and resettlement (DFDR), the term ‘involuntary resettlement’ is associated with decades of experience in relocating populations in the context of development projects.

Development actors put issues of poverty reduction at the center of their efforts while humanitarians often focus on protection; sometimes those actors are talking about the same thing but the lack of common vocabulary can impede communications. For example, development actors are sometimes cautious about explicit use of human rights terminology, particularly when working with those governments for whom this vocabulary is problematic.

Those whose principal interest is climate change often bring yet a different conceptual background and different terminology. Phrases such as ‘common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities’ are common currency in discussions of international approaches to climate change, but leave many humanitarians in the dark. While both humanitarian and development actors often refer to the need for community participation and consultation, for international legal experts, issues such as ‘consent’ of the populations to be moved and ‘accountability’ for failure to take preventive action lead to widespread debate.

For governments and international organizations working on disaster risk reduction and preparedness, there is a wealth of experience with preparing for short-term evacuations, but these have been largely developed in isolation from other communities working on displacement.

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9 See for example, McAdam, Jane and Elizabeth Ferris, “Planned Relocations in the Context of Climate Change: Conceptual and Legal Issues,” (forthcoming).
4. WHY IS PLANNED RELOCATION AN IMPORTANT ISSUE?

If climate change does make certain areas uninhabitable and people need to be moved, then governments have a responsibility to start thinking about that possibility and to begin planning. In particular national systems, legislation, public policies, coordination arrangements, allocation of specific responsibilities and funding need to be put into place. These steps do not happen overnight. This consultation and accompanying research is based on the assumption that planned relocations have an important role to play in future strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change.

5. WHO MIGHT BE IN NEED OF PLANNED RELOCATIONS?

Early efforts to identify who might need to be moved in response to the effects of climate change have identified several categories:

> People who need to be relocated from areas prone to sudden-onset natural hazards which are increasing in severity and intensity as a result of climate change (e.g. flood-prone areas, coastal areas);[10]

> People who need to be relocated because their livelihoods are threatened by slow-onset effects of climate change (e.g. increasing drought frequency, salinisation of water resulting from sea level rise or unsustainable use of aquifers) and who need to find permanent homes;

> People who need to be relocated because their country or parts of their country face destruction from the effects of climate change (e.g. small island states facing sea level rise but also riverbank erosion).[11]

It also may be the case that the slow-onset effects of climate change will lead many to voluntarily migrate in anticipation that conditions will worsen. Those who are left behind – and who will need government assistance to relocate – thus may be particularly vulnerable. As attention turns to defining the rights of the affected populations, a focus on particularly vulnerable groups should be central to discussions of planned relocations.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND RELOCATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

There are particular issues related to determining when people have to be moved because their area has become uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change. Who determines when an area is uninhabitable? On what basis? And how is a determination made that an area is uninhabitable because of climate change – rather than for example, normal climatic variations or the intersection of natural hazards and human interaction, such as deforestation? These are difficult issues. As the Foresight report, and most researchers who are working in the area, point out, climate change is likely to be an accelerator of other trends, but there are always other drivers of migration.[12] The Peninsula Principles spell out a helpful set of guidance for ‘climate migrants’ but do not tackle the difficult issue of determining when climate change forces people to leave or how to differentiate those who are displaced by the effects of climate change and other environmental/economic reasons.

The Peninsula Principles were developed as part of a multi-year project by Displacement Solutions to provide a comprehensive normative framework within which the rights of climate change migrants who are internally displaced can be addressed.[13]

There are ethical issues as well: should people who must be relocated because of the effects of climate change be treated differently than those who have to be moved for other reasons? Is there a compelling reason why someone at increased risk of volcanic eruption should be treated differently than a person at risk from coastal flooding? This was the rationale for Georgetown University’s Crisis Migration Project to consider varieties of forced migration rather than concentrating solely on climate change.[14]

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[10] Note that such relocations may also be necessary for natural disasters which are not related to climate change, e.g. from the slopes of volcanoes or earthquake-prone areas.

[11] The extent to which there may be conflict arising from climate-change-related resource scarcity is unknown. Some scholars point out that there have been few conflicts over water scarcity while others point to fighting that has erupted over other scarcities, such as land. There is another category of people likely to be affected: those who may need to be relocated because of projects undertaken to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as production of agrofuels and hydropower plants or large-scale adaptation projects such as sea walls, replanting of mangroves, and restoration of marshlands. These cases are similar to relocations made necessary by other forms of development-induced displaced and thus are not considered in this paper.


Evacuations may be advisory or mandatory. Although there are a host of concerns around advisory evacuations (or warnings), this paper focuses only on mandatory evacuations: when residents of a particular area are ordered to leave. As discussed in detail below, the IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters specify that forced evacuations should be carried out only when (a) provided for by law; (b) absolutely necessary under the circumstances to respond to a serious and imminent threat to life or health, and less intrusive measures would be insufficient to avert that threat; and (c) to the extent possible, carried out after the persons concerned have been informed and consulted.

Relocations, whether intended to be temporary or permanent, are a form of displacement. Because relocating people is a violation of their right to freedom of movement, when governments make the decision to move people against their will, they must do so only when there is overriding public interest.

The majority of planned relocations are expected to occur within the borders of countries and thus the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are the relevant international norm. As the Guiding Principles emphasize, it is the responsibility of national governments to ensure the protection and assistance of displaced persons within their borders – including those who are displaced through planned relocation efforts. However, there has been little research on the extent to which governments who relocate populations are exercising this responsibility within the context of the Guiding Principles and considerable anecdotal evidence exists that such relocations are often carried out in a way which does not uphold the principles in this normative framework.

Planned relocations across borders may also become necessary as a result of effects of climate change – an area for which there is limited international guid-

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15 Thus this excludes evacuation and relocation plans made by private enterprises, as when a company develops an evacuation plan for an office or residential building or when a company decides to relocate a factory to another location.

16 Evacuations may be advisory or mandatory. Although there are a host of concerns around advisory evacuations (or warnings), this paper focuses only on mandatory evacuations: when residents of a particular area are ordered to leave. As discussed in detail below, the IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters specify that forced evacuations should be carried out only when (a) provided for by law; (b) absolutely necessary under the circumstances to respond to a serious and imminent threat to life or health, and less intrusive measures would be insufficient to avert that threat; and (c) to the extent possible, carried out after the persons concerned have been informed and consulted.

17 In cases where individuals or communities decide on their own to relocate, the element of coercion can vary – here the emphasis is on those who relocate because of a natural hazard.

ance. Indeed the Nansen Initiative on Disasters and Cross-Border Displacement is beginning to work on the area of cross-border disaster-induced displacement where there is presently a legal gap. While there is some research in the Pacific on the planned relocation of communities within States, there is a paucity of information on cross-national planned relocations.

9. SOME OF THE LESSONS LEARNED THUS FAR

Lessons learned which may be helpful in devising guidance on planned relocations made necessary by disasters and the effects of climate change are spread across different institutions and different disciplinary repositories. Sometimes scholars, governments and practitioners are so steeped in the complexities of one particular type of information that they are simply unaware that related work has taken place in other areas. However, it is argued here that drawing on these diverse experiences – even when it forces us outside of our comfort zone – provides a more comprehensive overview than is possible with only one approach. Those working on climate change adaptation frameworks are often unfamiliar with experiences of resettling communities as part of a dam construction project or with resettling refugees in third countries. The siloes which characterize work on this issue are immense.

To stimulate discussion (and to vastly oversimplify), some of the lessons learned from the experiences of diverse actors in dealing with relocations are summarized below.

Guidance on evacuations has been largely developed at the national level, often within the framework of civil protection and national disaster management organizations. This guidance varies from country to country (and often among different sub-national authorities). Much of this guidance refers to the process by which evacuations may be ordered (who decides? on what basis?) and has been developed by national disaster management organizations, many of which were created on the basis of civil protection and include a strong law enforcement orientation. There have been efforts to consolidate some of the good practices on evacuations and to draw out common threads by the Pacific Humanitarian Team and more recently, by the International Organization for Migration. Except for these efforts, there is little international guidance on standards for evacuations in the context of climate change. The closest are the Sphere standards, which offer guidance on minimum emergency standards in sectors such as shelter and nutrition, and the IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Natural Disasters, which provide useful information on evacuation preparedness measures.

b. Development-forced displacement and resettlement (DFDR)

There is a substantial body of literature on resettlement carried out in support of development projects, spearheaded by the multilateral development banks. There seems to be a general consensus within this literature:

19 See http://www.nanseninitiative.org/
23 Note that the Sphere standards state that humanitarian organizations should be involved in evacuations only as exceptional measures in extreme circumstances. Sphere Handbook, p. 39, http://goo.gl/avYP1
that resettlement should be a last resort, that adequate financing of resettlement is necessary, that careful advance planning is essential, that issues of land tenure and livelihoods are key in resettling communities, that community involvement is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for successful resettlement, that learning from experience in other contexts is useful and that safeguard policies are needed to ensure that the concerns of those to be resettled are upheld.\(^{25}\)

Planned relocations – both evacuations and resettlement -- can be considered as a form of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the literature on DRR includes many useful insights on such issues as disaster risk assessment, disaster risk reduction in education, preparing communities to confront risks, including evacuation planning. Disaster risk reduction initiatives have considered relocations as a way of reducing risk. In 2012 the World Bank published a handbook on preventive relocations and series of case studies.\(^{29}\) The UNISDR website only references cases where relocations have been a form of DRR without giving many details on how this has occurred.\(^{30}\) UNISDR-organized workshops and the work of regional platforms offer insights on issues which may be relevant, such as workshops on relocation in urban contexts.\(^{31}\)

International law has dealt with issues of expropriation, arbitrary displacement, and questions of governmental accountability for failure to relocate populations from the impact of disasters. For example, there have been a number of cases where governments – and individuals – have been held responsible for their failure to relocate or evacuate populations before a disaster and to warn populations of imminent danger.\(^{32}\)

Within the vast literature on climate change, the discussion on adaptation is directly relevant to discussions of relocations made necessary by the impact of climate change, particularly the focus on planned adaptation which is defined as "adaptation that is the result of a deliberate policy decision, based on an awareness that conditions have changed or are about to change and that action is required to return to, maintain, or achieve a desired state."\(^{33}\) With respect to relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change, work by those focusing on climate change directs attention to the question of timing – when populations need to be moved and on the basis of what evidence.

\(^{25}\) For further discussion of these, see Ferris, Elizabeth, “Protection and Planned Relocations in the Context of Climate Change,” Division of International Protection, UNHCR, August 2012, [http://www.unhcr.org/5024d5169.html](http://www.unhcr.org/5024d5169.html).

\(^{26}\) See for example, resources available through the Global Protection Cluster [http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/) and UNHCR resources on camp management, e.g. [http://goo.gl/05h5Ux](http://goo.gl/05h5Ux) and Norwegian Refugee Council, The Camp Management Toolkit, [http://goo.gl/dvoVid](http://goo.gl/dvoVid).

\(^{27}\) See for example, UNHCR’s Handbook on Refugee Repatriation, 1996, [http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b3510.pdf](http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b3510.pdf).

\(^{28}\) See for example, UNHCR, The Integration of Resettled Refugees, [http://www.unhcr.org/52a6d85b6.html](http://www.unhcr.org/52a6d85b6.html); International Conference on Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees, [http://www.refworld.org/docid/404d49ab4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/404d49ab4.html).


\(^{31}\) See for example, “Workshop: Methodology development for the research on urban settlements in high risk areas in LAC,” UNISDR, [http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/22419](http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/22419).


\(^{33}\) IPCC, Fourth Assessment, Annexes (Glossary), Working Group 2, 2007 [http://goo.gl/wMg0v1](http://goo.gl/wMg0v1); In addition to planned adaptation, the IFCC references anticipatory or proactive adaptation and autonomous or spontaneous adaptation.
Finally, there is a body of literature on land, security of tenure, housing, and evictions that is related to concerns around relocation. In particular, guidelines on evictions are another area that offers some guidance for planned relocations.

There are also many case studies of relocations/resettlement from these different vantage points. In particular some of the work around relocations in the Pacific may be useful, as environmental factors were sometimes the key reasons for these relocations.

This background paper modestly indicates some of the richness of experience from different realms but barely scratches the surface in terms of the available resources.

10. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT EVACUATIONS?

As part of planning for disasters, national disaster management agencies (NDMAs) assess and map risks, develop contingency plans for evacuations (including plans for warnings, evacuation routes and transportation arrangements, temporary shelters, stockpiling supplies, etc.), warn the populations, carry out evacuations, and then plan for solutions, typically return to communities of origin (or alternatively settlement elsewhere when returns are not feasible).

Although NDMAs may develop plans for advisory evacuations, the focus here is on mandatory evacuations. Authority to decide on mandatory evacuations typically lies with institutions designated in national laws or policies. In some countries, a formal declaration of disaster (or emergency) is needed before an evacuation can take place. In some cases, governments are reluctant to declare such a disaster and order an evacuation out of concern for the political or economic ramifications, particularly in areas dependent on tourism.

There is a rich array of guidance on specific aspects of evacuations for disaster managers. Planning for evacuations may include, for example, maintaining registries of individuals with vulnerabilities (e.g. those who are mobility-impaired, have cognitive limitations, require health equipment), neighborhood planning and community self-help initiative, guidance on livestock evacuation, disaster risk reduction education (which includes involvement of children in evacuations). Similarly there is a rich array of assessments of evacuations. Recent work for example, on evacuations made necessary by the Great East Japan Earthquake (March 2011) identifies such shortcomings as insufficient supplies, loss of municipal/community leaders, lack of privacy in evacuation centers and information management.

The World Bank-related study notes differences between those evacuated by the Fukushima nuclear disaster and those affected by the tsunami, noting that those evacuated because of the nuclear accident were displaced multiple times. Assessments of evacuations in Bangladesh indicate major improvements after Cyclone Sidr in 2007 in terms of evacuation planning, including construction of new cyclone shelters, but note that pre-cyclone evacuations have suffered from difficulties in reaching a dispersed population and a tendency for populations to ‘wait and see’ before evacuating.

The Evacuation Responsiveness for Government Organizations (ERGO) project developed a comprehensive study of mass evacuation plans, organizing the study around six themes for each of which there is a considerable body of advice.

- Preparing the public
- Understanding the evacuation zone
- Disseminating the warning message
- Evacuating people
- Shelter management

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34 See for example, http://goo.gl/SI4efZ
35 See for example, UN Habitat, Scoping Paper on Guidelines and Practices on Evictions, Acquisition, Expropriation and Compensation, Draft Final Report 29 April 2010. Also see Forced Evictions: Global Challenge, Global Solutions, UN Habitat, http://goo.gl/YYD7nD; Further see OHCHR Basic principles and guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement, which were introduced but not adopted at http://goo.gl/SniUSD
39 See for example: http://goo.gl/rB6A0N; also see: http://goo.gl/uukoVm
The IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters\(^{41}\) spell out that evacuations are to be used when other preventive measures are insufficient to protect the population and should include information to affected populations, and particular measures to assist vulnerable people, such as persons with disabilities, elderly people, people in hospitals and other institutions to evacuate safely. The guidelines further specify that:

Persons unwilling to leave should not be evacuated against their will unless such forced evacuation:

(a) Is provided for by law;

(b) Is absolutely necessary under the circumstances to respond to a serious and imminent threat to their life or health, and less intrusive measures would be insufficient to avert that threat; and

(c) Is, to the extent possible, carried out after the persons concerned have been informed and consulted.\(^{42}\)

The guidelines further specify that people should be evacuated to areas as close as possible to their habitual residence, that authorities have the responsibility to protect the property of those who are evacuated and that the designated temporary shelters should respect the dignity and safety of those evacuated, including provisions for the participation of those evacuated.

The guidelines note that International and non-governmental organizations providing protection and assistance should not carry out or participate in forced evacuations, unless an imminent and serious threat to the lives, physical integrity or health of the evacuees cannot be averted without the involvement of the organizations concerned.

Some of the protection issues emerging from evacuations include:

> The timing of evacuation orders (for example, when decisions are made late, there is a risk that some people will be left behind; on the other hand, casualties may result when evacuation orders are issued which turn out to be unnecessary)

> Ensuring that warnings and evacuation orders are not only issued but are received by all affected individuals

> Responding to people who resist evacuations because of the need to protect their property

> Minimizing separation of families during evacuations

> Ensuring that vulnerable populations are identified and transported in evacuations

> Protecting communities, particularly vulnerable groups in temporary shelters (issues of lighting, privacy, security within the temporary shelters, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.)

> Training of national and local staff on the human rights dimensions of evacuations

> Ensuring adequate and timely information to affected communities

> Involving communities in management of temporary shelters

> Responding to pressure to move people out of temporary shelters (for example, when schools are used) before durable solutions are established

> Preventing people from returning to their communities when conditions are unsafe and providing mechanisms to address property issues which emerge (for example, when returnees find their property occupied by others or when they do not having formal title to their land which is often a condition for rebuilding or accessing recovery funds)

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\(^{42}\) Operational Guidelines, 1.4.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

Given the likelihood of an increase in the severity and unpredictability of extreme weather-related disasters, are the existing guidelines sufficient to provide guidance to governments?

Is there a need for further international guidance, given the array of materials available at the national level?

Are there common themes that would apply to evacuations made necessary by cyclones in south Asia, volcanic eruptions in the Pacific and Central America, hurricanes in the Caribbean and North America and earthquakes along the Pacific Rim beyond what is already available?

What kinds of guidance might be useful to national governments?
11. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OTHER EXPERIENCES WITH LONG-TERM PLANNED RELOCATIONS?

While most of the guidance on evacuations in the event of sudden-onset disasters has been developed in specific national contexts, there is a substantial body of literature on development-forced displacement and resettlement from different regions, both by international organizations (notably the World Bank and the regional development banks) and by researchers studying the impact of resettlement schemes on particular communities. Such guidance includes the World Bank’s Operational Policy on Involuntary Resettlement, one of the Bank’s safeguard policies and related policies by the regional development banks. In addition, national legislation provides a framework for resettlement efforts in some countries, such as India. Some of the efforts to draw lessons from the implementation of DFDR for relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change include work by de Alex de Sherbinin, Anthony Oliver-Smith, and Elizabeth Ferris.

For example, Alex de Sherbinin et al draw out some of the lessons from development-related displacement, noting that resettlement is a complex process with many risks, most notably those cited by the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction model: loss of land, employment, shelter and access to common resources, economic marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity and negative cultural and psychological impacts. Experience from those working with displacement resulting from development projects have identified the need for economically feasible reconstruction of productive activities, adequate cultural integration with hosts, adequate staffing and training of responsible officials, political will to promote the development of communities and involvement of affected communities in assessments and decision-making. They also call for the establishment of national legal frameworks for climate change resettlement to protect the rights of affected populations.

Elizabeth Ferris attempted to consolidate guidance from both the World Bank’s safeguard policies and the Guidelines for Internal Displacement to come up with a listing of 22 preliminary understandings or protection principles for planned relocation of populations as a result of climate change, including:

5. States are responsible for developing and implementing a resettlement plan which upholds the rights and enhances, or at least restores, the living standards of those who must be relocated because of the effects of climate change.

14. Relevant authorities should ensure that persons to be relocated have access to public services on a non-discriminatory basis.

The Peninsula Principles also spell out a series of obligations for states to ensure that the rights of those who are relocated because of the effects of climate change are upheld.

While there are a number of studies on specific resettlement schemes carried out in conjunction with development projects, there is less of a body of evidence on relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change. Exceptions are Robin Bronen’s work on indigenous communities in Alaska, studies of historical relocations in the Pacific, and work focusing on obstacles to relocations in the Carteret islands.

43 See footnote 25.
Some of the protection issues emerging from such cases highlight:

> The importance of planning and particularly of consultations with communities
> The need to preserve social capital as much as possible
> The importance of assessing needs and vulnerabilities of affected populations with particular attention to livelihoods
> The need to consider issues of integration into host communities and relationships with the communities
> The need to address land and tenure rights as well as shelter and livelihoods

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:** What are the gaps in existing guidance for long-term relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change? What further guidance is needed? In what form would additional guidance be most helpful to States?

### 12. HOW DOES PLANNED RELOCATION RELATE TO PLANNING FOR AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

The National Adaptation Plans (NAP) aim to strengthen the adaptation capacities of developing countries by allowing them to assess and reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Unlike the National Adaptation Plan for Action (NAPA), which helped to identify and prioritize urgent adaptation needs in the short term, NAPs are broader and cross-cutting. They cover medium to long-term needs, are integrated in the national development plans, and include multiple tools that a country uses in its planning processes. States are still in the process of formulating their NAPs. Of the NAPAs available online, 11 mention relocation of populations as an adaptation strategy. However, almost all of these do no more than mention the term ‘relocation’ with the notable exceptions of the Republic of Maldives and the Solomon Islands, which devote several sentences each to the issue of relocations. In general, there is little mention at all of mobility (whether migration or displacement) in the NAPAs. Given the fact that planned relocations are expected to impact developed as well as developing countries, it is apparent that few governments are either planning for eventual relocations or are making public plans which do exist. It may be of course that such plans are being developed outside of the public eye – which is understandable given popular sentiment that governments should be doing everything possible to make population relocations unnecessary.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:** How can States be encouraged to consider planned relocations as a form of adaptation in developing and implementing their National Adaptation Plans? And how can States that do not have such plans be encouraged to think about the need to plan for eventual relocations? More generally, how can those responsible for working on climate adaptation policies at the global level, including issues of climate adaptation finance, be encouraged to consider issues of human mobility as a form of adaptation?

### 13. MOVING FORWARD

Given the diversity of perspectives, one outcome from this consultation could be to constitute a small interdisciplinary expert group to struggle with the task of putting together these findings into a succinct handbook for policy-makers, along the lines of the best wisdom for law, humanitarian action, development practice, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Developing guidance on planned relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change would be useful to several constituencies. Most directly, this guidance is expected to be useful to national governments (and local governments in some areas) as they plan climate change adaptation strategies which incorporate a dimension on relocations. Representatives of affected communities (or potentially affected communities) are also likely to find such guidance in working with their governments to develop plans for relocations. While international actors would primarily play a supportive role, the development of international guidance would also be useful to them in supporting and advising governments. In particular it would enable them to suggest appropriate actions based on experiences in other regions and also might ensure some consistency of advice from experiences of other constituencies.

The Sanremo consultation will offer the opportunity to develop guidance on relocations, building on work that has already been done. There are various forms that this guidance can take and participants will be asked to

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54 UNFCCC, National Adaptation Plan for Action, http://goo.gl/H50meM
55 These include Bhutan, Gambia, Kiribati, Malawi, the Republic of Maldives, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands and the United Republic of Tanzania.
consider the following (or other) options for moving the process forward.

On the global level, options include:

- Development of guiding principles for planned relocations (perhaps along the lines of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement) which set out general principles which can be used by governments in developing their own policies. While the Guiding Principles fall into the category of soft international law, the extent to which they are incorporated into national laws and policies is perhaps the best indicator of their utility.

- A state-led process to collect best practices and based on these practices, to develop useful tools and protection principles which can then serve as a basis for further state action (along the lines of the Nansen Initiative)

- An expert process to collect the best examples of practice and to identify common principles (such as the principles for International Disaster Relief Law\textsuperscript{56}, perhaps eventually accompanied by model legislation (although this might prove more difficult given national variation in laws on land, eminent domain, authority for ordering evacuations)

Alternatively, instead of developing a new set of stand-alone principles on planned relocations, another possibility would be to incorporate such guidance into existing instruments such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Peninsula Principles, or other guidance emerging from initiatives such as the Crisis Migration Project or the Nansen Initiative or into on-going deliberations related to climate change or to the International Law Commission.

On the regional level:

- Regional organizations could take up the issue of planned relocations and formulate common approaches which are most relevant to potential effects of climate change for member states in their region. Given the difficulties in developing guidance applicable to a vast range of situations, perhaps centering the discussion in regional forums would be more appropriate.

On the hazard-specific level:

- Alternatively, perhaps processes to identify guidance for planned relocations made necessary by the effects of climate change could more easily be formulated for specific types of disasters/climate change impacts. Those facing challenges of sea level rise, for example, may have different needs for guidance in planning relocations than those facing widespread drought or recurrent floods.

- Alternatively, perhaps guidance for planning relocations could be more easily formulated by sector, e.g. principles on livelihoods or land or gender in planning relocations made necessary by the impacts of climate change which could build on existing standards and then be applied in different contexts and settings.

14. GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING

This background paper has identified several gaps in our understanding of and policies and guidelines related to relocations made necessary by climate change. For example, most of the resources on evacuations focus on particular national situations and, with a very few exceptions, there are no compilations of good practices on how to carry out evacuations. Nor are there resources available on how to manage planned relocation made necessary by the effects of climate change – although handbooks by the World Bank and other international organizations on related issues are useful in this respect. A recommendation from the Sanremo consultation could seek to address this gap, perhaps by suggesting that a small expert group compile best practices on evacuations and systematically collect and synthesize lessons from resettlement in other contexts.

In order to move the process forward, it would also be useful to broaden the discussion of planned relocations by encouraging discussion in other forums, such as the IASC, UNISDR regional platforms, climate-change adaptation networks, academic centers and other UN organizations. The Sanremo consultation could suggest ways in which these forums could be encouraged to discuss the issue and contribute their expertise. As specific recommendations seem to be more successful in implementation, it would be helpful to suggest specific

\textsuperscript{56} IFRC, IDRL Guidelines, \url{https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines/}
individuals or organizations tasked with taking these ideas forward. Moreover, how can discussion of these issues be broadened to include more governments?

The issue of planned relocations in the context of climate change is a complex issue, particularly given the diversity of situations in which such measures may be likely in the future. But the Sanremo consultation offers an opportunity to make significant and concrete contributions to advancing understanding of the issue, further identifying applicable guidelines, and developing concrete measures for taking the process forward.
This is a multi-partner project funded by the European Commission (EC) whose overall aim is to address a legal gap regarding cross-border displacement in the context of disasters. The project brings together the expertise of 3 distinct partners (UNHCR, NRC/IDMC and the Nansen Initiative) seeking to:

1. Increase the understanding of States and relevant actors in the international community about displacement related to disasters and climate change;

2. Equip them to plan for and manage internal relocations of populations in a protection sensitive manner; and

3. Provide States and other relevant actors tools and guidance to protect persons who cross international borders owing to disasters, including those linked to climate change.