

**SUBMISSION by the  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), THE UNITED NATIONS  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) AND THE UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY (UNU)**

**In Cooperation with  
THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NRC) AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS  
(RSG ON THE HR OF IDPs)**

**Climate change, migration, and displacement:  
impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation options**

**6 February 2009**

**5th session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action  
under the Convention (AWG-LCA 5). Bonn, March 29 – April 8, 2009**

## **Introduction**

The First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued in 1990 noted that the greatest single impact of climate change might be on human migration and displacement. This claim was further substantiated by the findings of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (2007), which provided ample indications that climate change will raise the risk of humanitarian emergencies, as a result of, inter alia, increasing intensity of natural hazards. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN University (UNU) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) – agencies directly concerned with migration and displacement issues – are already facing the growing impact of climate change on human mobility.

While there are no scientifically verified estimates of climate change-related displacement or of overall population flows triggered by the effects of climate change, it is evident that gradual and sudden environmental changes are already resulting in substantial human migration and displacement. This trend is expected to continue, with anywhere between 50 and 200 million people moving as a result by the middle of the century, either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis. There is a possibility of even higher numbers if the IPCC's worst-case scenarios materialize. In some cases, in particular at early stages of environmental degradation and for those with the resources to move, migration may be an adaptation mechanism, allowing for example to diversify the sources of income. In other instances, in particular in cases of natural disasters and for those with fewer means to move, leaving their places of habitual residence may be an expression of failed adaptation and constitute a survival mechanism.

Ensuring that migration and displacement triggered by climate change are systematically considered and addressed by the international community is our shared responsibility. This cannot be achieved unless these consequences are duly acknowledged in the successor-agreement to the Kyoto Protocol<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Climate-change related migration was highlighted in several statements at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14), including in the opening statement by the Minister of the Environment of Poland and President of COP 14 and in the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Algeria to the Republic of Poland on behalf of the African Group.

IOM, UNHCR and UNU in cooperation with NRC and the RSG on the HR of IDPs therefore compiled this joint submission with the aim of bringing the migration and displacement implications of climate change to the attention of the UNFCCC and requesting that these implications are considered in the 15th Conference of Parties agreement. This submission is based on the assembly document text (FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev.1) and contains concrete text proposals in order to indicate the gaps relating to migration and displacement in the previous draft and facilitate the inclusion of these issues in subsequent versions of the draft agreement. Climate-change related migration and displacement is a topic of relevance for Article 4, paragraph 1(e) and 1(f) of the Convention, the Bali Action Plan, and the Nairobi Work Programme.

This submission should be read in conjunction with the previous submissions also relating to the topic of climate change, migration and displacement:

- 1) “Change, Migration and Displacement: Who will be affected?” Working paper submitted by the informal group on Migration/Displacement and Climate Change of the IASC – 31 October 2008 to the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- 2) “Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and Risk Management Practices: Critical Elements for Adaptation to Climate Change” Submission to the UNFCCC Adhoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action by The Informal Taskforce on climate change of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction 11 November 2008.

### **Ideas and Proposals on paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan<sup>2</sup>**

Additional Text Proposals<sup>3</sup> by  
IOM, UNHCR and UNU  
in cooperation with NRC and RSG on the HR of IDPs

## **II. A shared vision for long-term cooperative action**

### **14. On the scientific basis**

- More analytical inter-disciplinary work is required to improve the knowledge base and understanding of the scale, nature and patterns of climate change related population movements and impacts of such movement on the population distribution at the national, regional and global levels.
- There is a need for better assessment of the humanitarian consequences of climate change, including in relation to climate related population movements. Such assessments should be gender sensitive with special attention given to the situation of indigenous peoples. The results of such assessments should

---

<sup>2</sup> FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev1, 10 December 2008, the text below refers to the paragraph number and titles as given in this document.

<sup>3</sup> These proposals build on the references to migration and displacement and related issues included by the Member States in paragraphs 177 (b) and 187 (g) of the assembly document FCCC/AWGLCA/2008/16/Rev1, 10 December 2008.

feed into disaster risk reduction, risk planning and preparedness strategies and activities.

**16. On the scope of the shared vision**

- Include the consideration of the impacts of climate change on population settlement and movements and the need to manage these impacts, including as part of the adaptation strategies and activities.
- Include the recognition of humanitarian consequences of climate change, including migration, displacement and, in some instances, statelessness, and of the need to take action to minimize them, including through prevention of displacement, and to prepare for and address the unavoidable consequences.

**17. On principles for a shared vision**

- Consider giving priority to the particular needs of the people most vulnerable to and most affected by climate change, including the displaced and those at risk of displacement.

**19. On a shared vision for enhanced action on adaptation**

- Build coherence at national and international levels between mitigation and adaptation policies and other relevant policy domains, such as development, humanitarian action, migration and health.
- Include migration, both internal and cross-border, as a possible adaptation strategy, especially at early stages of gradual environmental degradation.

**IV. Enhanced action on adaptation**

**A. International cooperation to support urgent implementation of adaptation actions**

**99. On the context of adaptation planning and implementation**

- Adaptation strategies and action need to consider the human mobility, health and demographic implications of climate change as well as their economic and social consequences.
- Adaptation strategies and action need to consider the humanitarian consequences of climate change, including migration, displacement and the need to prepare for and address them.
- Consider giving priority to the particular needs of the people most vulnerable to and the people most affected by climate change, including the displaced and those at risk of displacement.

**100. On the nature of adaptation plans**

(a) A framework/structure for adaptation (AOSIS, MISC.2/Add.1 and MISC.2/Add.2; EC and its member States, MISC.5/Add.1 and MISC.5/Add.2; United States, MISC.5; EC and its member States, adaptation workshop) should be adopted,

geared towards the evaluation and implementation of strategies and programme support (EC and its member States, MISC.2; United States, MISC.5) and structured but flexible (AOSIS, MISC.5/Add.2). The formulation of such a framework/structure should take into account/focus on, inter alia:

- Consideration of migration, both internal and cross-border, as a possible adaptation strategy, especially at the early stages of environmental degradation. This will require factoring migration considerations into national adaptation policies and vice versa.

(b) National adaptation plans should go beyond the current NAPAs, and should:

- Incorporate other relevant policy considerations such as development, human mobility, disaster prevention and preparedness, avoidance of statelessness and health and be consistent with relevant national policies and strategies.

102. On **vulnerability and adaptation assessments** to support adaptation planning and Implementation

(a) Consideration of the following elements in order to ensure the effectiveness of the assessment process:

- The need to collect better data on the nature and patterns of climate change related population movements and vulnerability mapping to more accurately locate areas experiencing or likely to experience an outward flow of people owing to the direct or indirect effects of climate change,
- Vulnerability, risk and adaptation assessments to take account of the risk of displacement and statelessness as well as the particular protection needs of those already displaced.

103. On **incentivizing adaptation, and creating enabling environments**

(c) That governments should play leading roles in creating enabling environments for adaptation, including through identifying vulnerabilities to climate change; improving the environment for doing business; creating legal and regulatory conditions that facilitate adaptation; reducing perverse incentives that encourage maladaptation; enhancing the necessary information and knowledge base; and educating stakeholders (United States, MISC.5/Add.2);

- That governments may consider facilitating the role of migration as an adaptation strategy by strengthening its development effects on areas of origin.

105. Parties proposed that **financial support** be directed at:

- Disaster risk reduction, risk management and humanitarian response at all levels, whether local, national, or international.
- Community stabilization and development projects aimed at increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities.
- Protection and assistance in accordance with the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to persons internally displaced as a result of the effects

of climate change. States significantly affected by displacement and migration as a result of climate change may also require support to meet their needs, including to ensure adequate protection of and assistance to concerned populations.

#### 108. On **the ways to enhance knowledge sharing**

- Facilitate the sharing and dissemination of good practices based on countries' experiences in addressing cross-border and internal environmental population movement, relocation and resettlement as well as return.
- Support inter-disciplinary cooperation to improve the knowledge base and generate data on the scale, nature and patterns of climate change related population movements.

### **2. Input by observer organizations**

#### 115. On institutional arrangements

(a) Efforts by the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to coordinate action to support Parties in respect to climate change, and specifically to provide support for adaptation practices, should be continued (ISDR, MISC.6), and adaptation efforts should take advantage of the multistakeholder ISDR system and the multi-partner IASC system (IASC/ISDR, MISC.6/Add.1);

### **D. Economic diversification to build resilience**

#### **2. Input by observer organizations**

123. Organizations proposed that economic diversification policies should be organized within sectors or by the promotion of new activities from other economic sectors, and that all stakeholders be consulted (ITUC); new activities in other economic sectors should be proposed for workers in sectors at risk, and social dialogue with all stakeholders at all levels needs to be undertaken in an institutionalized manner (ILO, MISC.5/Add.2).

- Recognize and facilitate the role of migration, including climate change related migration, as an income diversification strategy at the household level; seek to strengthen the development effect of migrant remittances on areas of origin.

163. On **guiding the disbursement of, and access to, financial resources** for mitigation and adaptation and technology cooperation

- Objective criteria, such as a small number of internationally recognized indicators representing economic status and vulnerability to climate impacts, including the likelihood of migration and displacement could be developed for determining who receives broader multilateral funding.