



A strengthened international protection framework

- The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is of crucial significance in strengthening the **international protection** framework, notably through providing a basis for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing among UN Member States for addressing the needs of displaced persons, and involving other stakeholders more actively in strengthening responses. The Global Compact on Refugees also strengthens the international protection framework including in the context of climate change and disasters.
- The final text of the GCR recognizes that ‘**environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movements**’. It underlines the importance of ‘**reducing disaster risks**’ (paragraph 9), of **preparedness measures** (paragraphs 52-53); of ‘global, regional and national **early warning** and early action mechanisms’ (paragraph 53), as well as **evidence-based** forecasting of future movements in addition to ‘**including refugees in disaster risk reduction strategies** (paragraph 79).
- In its paragraph 63, the GCR calls for ‘stakeholders with relevant mandates and expertise [to] provide guidance and support for measures to address other **protection and humanitarian challenges**. This could include measures to assist those forcibly displaced by natural disasters, taking into account **national law and regional instruments** as applicable, as well as practices such as **temporary protection and humanitarian stay arrangements**’.

- In the context of climate change and disasters, the Global Compact on Refugees, together with the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, constitute a solid and coherent framework to address human mobility challenges.

Integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change

- UNHCR has been contributing to the implementation of the Workplan of the Task Force on Displacement (TFD) established by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage of the UNFCCC through the preparation of recommendations on **integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change** for submission at COP24.
- As a member of the WIM Task Force on Displacement, UNHCR led the production of a **'mapping of global and regional guidance and tools on averting, minimizing, addressing and seeking durable solutions in relation to displacement in the context of climate change and disaster'** and contributed to mappings conducted by other TFD members.
- In its annual report, the WIM Executive Committee expresses appreciation to the members of the TFD for their work, including the mapping exercises produced by TFD members, and the outcomes of the stakeholder meeting organised by PDD and IOM with the support of UNHCR in May 2018.
- The WIM Executive Committee extends the **mandate of the TFD** and asks that it advises on and guides the implementation of strategic workstream (d) of its five-year rolling Workplan that calls for 'Enhanced cooperation and facilitation in relation to human mobility, including migration, displacement and planned relocation'.
- The WIM Executive Committee's recommendations invite Parties to consider formulating laws, policies and strategies in the context of human mobility, taking into account human rights obligations and other **international standards and obligations** (para 51(s)(i)); to enhance **research, data collection**, risk analysis and information sharing while ensuring **participation of communities affected and at risk of displacement** (para 5(s)(ii)); to **strengthen preparedness and early warning** (para 5(s)(iii)); and to find durable solutions for **internally displaced people** (para 5(s)(v)). It also recommends to continue developing **guidance, tools and good practices on applying international legal instruments and normative frameworks** (para 5(t)(iii)d) as well as calls for **enhanced cooperation** (para 5(t)(ii)), engagement of stakeholders with bodies under the Convention in relevant international frameworks in a manner that **avoids duplication of efforts on climate change aspects** (para 5(v)), and promotes **coherence within the UN system on addressing human mobility in the context of climate change** (para 5(w)).

Relevance of refugee law in the context of climate change and disaster displacement

- Climate change is recognized as a **driver of movement** – be it in the form of displacement where people are forced to leave their homes, of migration as an adaptation strategy, or of planned relocation. Climate change also acts a 'threat multiplier' which may exacerbate conflict over limited natural resources.

- Where conflict or violence interacts with the effects of climate change and disasters, **international and regional refugee law frameworks** can be applicable¹.
- UNHCR is finalising a ground-breaking study in the frame of its engagement in the Workplan of the **Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)** in follow-up to the Nansen Initiative. The study analyses specific situations of displacement, as well as State practice in the provision of **international protection** to people forced to flee their countries, where climate change or disasters and conflict or violence have occurred.
- The study's findings reaffirm the **relevance of refugee principles in providing protection to people displaced across borders in so-called 'nexus' situations**. This is reflected in the state practice of countries analysed in the study. The research highlights the importance of ensuring that access to asylum procedures and refugee protection is provided where needed, while other migration pathways and responses may also be relevant and applicable in such contexts.
- There is a need for **further analysis and guidance on the applicability of refugee law in the context of climate change and disasters**. To address this knowledge gap, over the coming months UNHCR will continue its work with States and other partners to further enhance understanding of the types of protection provided in contexts where nexus dynamics are present.
- **Complexity and multi-causality** are key features of climate change and disaster displacement. This means that the need remains for further research to build knowledge on the dynamics of climate change, disasters and displacement, and their impact on people's lives, to analyse the complexity and multi-causality of the phenomena, and to progressively improve national and international responses in this challenging context.

Call for action on climate change and disaster displacement

- UNHCR underlines the need to **support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees** once formally adopted. In particular, the first **Global Refugee Forum** to be held in late 2019 will be an important milestone in which all actors should be engaged
 - Similarly, UNHCR encourages all stakeholders to support recommendations of the WIM Executive Committee, on behalf of its Task Force on Displacement, for their **adoption at COP24 and with commitment to their implementation**.
 - UNHCR calls upon all stakeholders to continue to reinforce their **application of the existing legal and normative frameworks** for people forced to flee, including international instruments, regional and national refugee frameworks.
 - UNHCR invites all relevant actors to **integrate human mobility aspects into relevant policy and legal documents and planning processes** including, inter alia, in Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans and Disaster Risk Reduction strategies, and to adopt a protection-sensitive approach in all actions taken.
 - UNHCR calls for **enhanced collaboration between humanitarian, development and climate change actors** at all levels to ensure a holistic approach to climate-related crises.
 - UNHCR encourages all parties to take action to prevent climate-related disasters, scale up **efforts to strengthen resilience, support sustainable adaptation of vulnerable communities and ecosystems**, and to sufficiently **protect populations affected by climate change**, including through strengthened legal frameworks that recognise climate-related disasters as a cause for displacement.
 - UNHCR remains firmly **committed to further engage with States and other partners** including in the frame of the PDD, the TFD, the Sendai Framework, and in other global policy processes to ensure that we are all equipped to address this challenge and to provide protection to people displaced in the context of climate change and disasters.

¹ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5906e0824.html>