

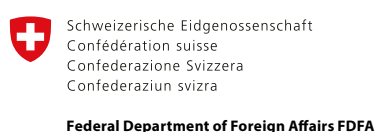


# LINKING HUMAN MOBILITY, DISASTERS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

## ABOUT THE NANSEN INITIATIVE

Every year, millions of people are forcibly displaced by floods, wind storms, earthquakes, droughts and other natural hazards. Many find refuge within their own country but some have to flee abroad. In the context of climate change, such movements are likely to increase. National and international responses to this challenge are insufficient and protection for affected people remains inadequate.

Launched in October 2012 by the Governments of Switzerland and Norway, the Nansen Initiative is a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on the development of a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change.



With the support of:



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## THE CONTEXT

Between 2008 and 2012 sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones and floods displaced an estimated 144 million people. The global number of people displaced by slow-onset disasters like drought is not known. However, it is clear that in 2011, some 1.3 million Somalis were internally displaced, with 290,000 people seeking refuge across international borders in the context of the Horn of Africa drought crisis and instability within Somalia. An estimated 100'000 – 200'000 people left Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake to the neighboring Dominican Republic and other countries in the region.

In the future, climate change is predicted to increase the frequency and intensity of hydro-meteorological disasters, prompting even higher levels of displacement. These large-scale displacements have a devastating effect on people and create complex challenges for recovery and reconstruction efforts. Displacement could often be avoided or at least mitigated by taking appropriate disaster risk reduction measures.

To date however, displacement has received little recognition within national, regional and international disaster risk reduction plans and frameworks. It is difficult to see how the envisaged post-2015 Hyogo Framework for disaster risk reduction can be comprehensive and effective without explicitly addressing displacement.



## OUR PERSPECTIVE

Based upon discussions within the DRR Regional Platforms and the conclusions of the Nansen Initiative consultative process to date, we suggest that the following key messages should inform drafting of the post-2015 Hyogo Framework for disaster risk reduction with regard to addressing disaster related displacement:

- Tens of millions of people are displaced every year in the context of disasters. Thus, displacement constitutes one of the key challenges to disaster risk reduction.
- Such displacement has devastating consequences but appropriate disaster risk reduction measures help to avoid or mitigate displacement. For example, prevention and resilience building allow people to stay, and the facilitation of voluntary migration and planned relocation.
- In order to holistically manage disaster risks, it is important that prevention, preparedness and finding durable solutions to displacement in disaster contexts, both internally and across international borders, be recognized within the new Framework on disaster risk reduction.

States have the primary responsibility to provide protection and assistance to their citizens. This duty requires states to prepare for disasters and to do what is possible to prevent threats to the lives and property of their people, including preventing displacement. The state's positive obligation to prevent foreseeable harm may also include providing support to those obliged to move from high-risk areas.

Disaster risk reduction activities such as infrastructure improvements, evacuation plans, relocating people at risk of displacement to safer areas, land reform, promoting voluntary migration as an adaptive measure to environmental degradation, and other measures to improve resilience are all potential actions to prevent and mitigate displacement. State responsibility may also require the government to mobilize relevant regional and international organizations, mechanisms and resources.

**1.6** billion people  
have been affected by disasters since 2000

**40%** floods  
worldwide happened in East Asia Pacific  
BETWEEN 1980-2011

## PREPAREDNESS

every \$ 1 spent on preparedness = \$ 3-4 saved after disaster strikes

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR CONSULTATIONS

As of August 2014, the Nansen Initiative has held three inter-governmental Regional Consultations in the Pacific, Central America and the Greater Horn of Africa and three civil society organization consultations in the Pacific, Central America and South-East Asia to discuss the protection and assistance needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of disasters. Participants have consistently emphasized the importance of integrating human mobility within national and regional disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes.

Recognizing the potential of DRR measures to respond to displacement issues, the Regional Consultations have also identified the challenge of ensuring that disaster risk reduction and resilience building measures close the gap between development initiatives and the humanitarian response phase. At the national level, this challenge illustrates the need for coordination between government departments, and increased integration of elements of disaster risk reduction plans into development policies and national adaptation plans.

This section will highlight a few key recommendations addressing disaster risk reduction from three Nansen Initiative Regional Consultations held to date.

# \$180 billion every year

estimated average losses from earthquakes and cyclonic wind

Our ability to build resilience has not kept pace with our ability to grow

## in 2012 extreme weather

drove more than 32 million people from their homes



Mexican fisherman whose livelihoods were devastated by Hurricane Isidore invested in risk management that **prevented the loss of on average \$35,000** when Hurricane Wilma hit three years later

## PACIFIC

- 1 Strengthen the resilience** of communities through risk assessments, disaster preparedness measures, disaster risk reduction measures, and development interventions.
- 2 Integrate voluntary migration, forced displacement, and planned relocation** within national laws and policies, such as National Adaptation Plans, Joint National Action Plans, and National Disaster Management Plans.
- 3 Continue to strengthen and deepen education, training and upskilling** of Pacific Islanders, including through qualification and accreditation alignment, so that they can migrate with dignity if they choose to do so.
- 4 Strengthen national capacities** to identify and address the assistance and protection needs of particularly vulnerable persons among those affected by disasters and climate change.
- 5 Take measures** such as land audits, demarcation of uncontested boundaries and community land mapping to facilitate the identification of land when people need to be temporarily or permanently moved, within their own country or abroad.

## CENTRAL AMERICA

- 1 Incorporate internal and cross-border disaster-induced displacement scenarios** within instruments like National Disaster Risk Management Policies and National Systems for Civil Protection, as well as in the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (PCGIR), the Central American Regional Mechanism for Mutual Assistance and Coordination, the International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms and the revision of the Hyogo Framework for Action.
- 2 Harmonize relevant definitions and concepts** at the regional level regarding comprehensive disaster risk management and displacement.
- 3 Promote the integration of activities** aimed at strengthening the resilience of communities at risk of displacement in development plans and actions.
- 5 Develop bi-national and regional contingency plans** that identify risk scenarios and formulate comprehensive disaster risk management actions to reduce vulnerability and strengthen capacity to respond to cross-border displacement.
- 6 Strengthen the country of origin's effort** to seek comprehensive and durable solutions, with the participation and commitment of development actors and the development sector as a whole from the initial stages, with a focus on including comprehensive risk management and climate change adaptation in local, national and regional development plans.



# GREATER HORN OF AFRICA

- 1 Recognize** that preventing and mitigating the impact of all forms of displacement in disaster contexts is a development issue that should be addressed within national development plans to strengthen the resilience of communities in areas at risk of displacement as well as in areas likely to host displaced people, through measures such as investing in infrastructure, livelihoods, education, and health care.
- 2 Integrate human mobility and the needs of communities** affected by displacement, including host communities, into regional and national disaster risk reduction strategies and adaptation plans.
- 3 Consider programs that increase the resilience of pastoralist communities**, such as livestock insurance, access to credit and funds, mobile schools, mobile health services, the development of industries for pastoral products, and support for alternative and diversified livelihoods.
- 4 Take appropriate action to implement** paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Summary Statement of the 5th African Regional Platform and the Third Ministerial Meeting for Disaster Risk Reduction, which calls for cross-border cooperation on population movements including those induced by disasters. Anticipate cross-border movements and plan for the provision of assistance to those arriving through strengthening and developing cross-border data collection, early warning mechanisms, and contingency and preparedness plans that draw on information from multiple countries and incorporate traditional community-based knowledge and practices.
- 5 Recommend to carry out disaster risk management** in accordance with existing relevant legal frameworks such as the Kampala Convention and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.
- 6 Establish and strengthen coordination and response mechanisms** to address cross-border movements in the context of climate change and disasters, without prejudice to the sovereignty and security of the host states and the obligation of those admitted to respect the law of the land.



# tens of millions

disaster related, displaced people each year

## OUR CONCLUSION

Based on these recommendations we suggest that the Post-2015 Framework:

- Acknowledges in its preamble that disasters displace tens of millions of people each year.

Includes into its “ Priorities for Action”:

- The adoption of specific public policies.
- The establishment of coordination and funding mechanisms as well as procedures to prevent and respond to internal and cross-border displacement.
- The integration of durable solutions for the displaced into post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts.



*Failing to take action to prevent and mitigate internal and cross-border displacement discounts the needs of a particularly vulnerable group among the tens of millions of people affected by disasters every year and neglects an essential challenge of disaster risk reduction.”*

**Prof. Walter Kaelin**, Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative

**THE  
NANSEN  
INITIATIVE**

DISASTER-INDUCED CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

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**Source:** IDMC,  
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