

MCGS MUN 2018

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Agenda: Protecting Populations Displaced by Climate Change and Disasters

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to the simulation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the prestigious Mayo College Girls' School Model United Nations Conference 2018.

The committee UNHCR always turns out to be an extremely enthralling and interesting simulation. The committee deals with a set of people who have to move away from their places of origin and seek resettlement in new strange environments, leaving their culture, traditions, people and means of livelihood behind. Keeping that in mind, it will be absolutely imperative for you to have a sensitive and proactive approach towards this committee.

The agenda that we are dealing with is "Protecting Populations Displaced by Climate Change and Disasters". This agenda holds a lot more importance in our present circumstances more than ever, simple because of the sheer critical and turbulent times that we are living in. You might have heard or read about people being displaced from their place of residence because of the drastic effects of climate change and disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricane etc. Even though, it is something that is being talked about very widely lately, but the issue has not been addressed adequately at both international or regional levels. Needless to say, there have been efforts both at the international and regions levels around the world to ensure and protects rights of displaced persons but these efforts can hardly be called satisfactory. Thousands and millions of people around the world still bear the worst of conflict, climate change and natural disasters.

This background guide has been formulated as to give you a basic grounding to the agenda at hand. However, this in no way should be taken to be exhaustive to your research. We request you to go beyond the content of this guide and do more in-depth research for a much better understanding and debate.

We look forward to an invigorating and original debate. The latter is specifically a trait we value most.

Feel free to reach out for any queries whatsoever.

Regards

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Vision for the Committee

Being a delegate in a committee like this makes it imperative for you to be able to not only have a sound understanding of all the humanitarian, social, political, legal and economic aspects to the agenda, but also demands of you to have a sensitive approach to it. By having a sensitive approach, we mean that you must pay rightful attention to the ground realities, the challenges involved and aim for providing a sound logical reasoning consistent with the realities of the situation for each argument that you make. Any discussion on the agenda will essentially be incomplete without having that.

Thus, we expect your arguments to be as inclusive as possible. Now, for an argument to be inclusive and complete in its form, it has to be stated with facts, reasoning and analysis. Once you make your argument within those three parameters, you can place yourself on the helm when it comes to content. And how you effectively cover those parameters is essentially by developing a good understanding of the committee and its functioning and of your country in terms of basic facts like geography, geopolitical situation, system of government etc and most important foreign policy. You can research about your foreign policy by looking at your countries past actions on the concerned topic and its dealings with other countries in the same domain.

Divide your research into “Thematic” and “Country” specific research. Thematic involves researching about the various themes that come under the agenda and country specific involves researching about the specific take of your and other countries with regards to the agenda. This way you can streamline your research well.

Also, make sure that you question yourselves on the argument that you wish to make. That helps serve two important purposes,

- 1) it makes you confident of the argument you are going to make.
- 2) It helps you defend your argument and stand by it. However, do not refrain from making one at all in case you are not able to serve the two above mentioned purposes. We say that because what happens when you do that is that you learn. Essentially what we all are here for.

All of you might have your own reasons for coming to this conference. And whatever they maybe, it's absolutely fair to have them. But when you are dealing with an agenda like the one we have, it presents you with a great opportunity which if done justice with, can positively change your perspective towards how you see and treat certain things and situations, eventually help you transform your inner self. So, yes, even though you all are coming as representatives of certain institutions and beliefs, having a mandate and stance of your own, but do not let any of it come in conflict with basic principles of humanity and neither do let yourselves be completely ignorant of them.

A good debater is not one who can only speak and argue well, but rather one who can also pay equally good amount of attention and listen to what others have to say. So, maybe this time, treat this committee as an opportunity where you make yourselves good listeners and take into consideration what others have to say, as well as try to appreciate.

Lastly, treat this as a committee where you genuinely make an effort to learn!

Acceptable Sources of Information

News Sources:

REUTERS – Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.

<http://www.reuters.com/>

State operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council.

BBC www.bbc.com/ (UK) IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

Government Reports: Government Reports can be used during the creation of position papers. Government reports of any country can be found on their website.

Examples: <http://www.mofa.gov.sy/>

UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered as credible information or evidence.

Multilateral Organizations: Under situations of contestations by the members of these organizations.

NATO <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>

ASEAN <http://www.aseansec.org/>

OPEC http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/

Under no circumstances whatsoever will sources such as

<http://www.wikipedia.org/>

www.telegraph.co.uk/

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

or any related sources be accepted. None the less, we will consider whatever you present to you and rule upon on a case by case basis.

Note: Nothing contained in this background guide can be used as substantial proof/evidence in committee; this document is solely for research purposes and whatever content is written in the Background Guide, in no way limits the scope for research, it is merely to give direction to the council debate and proceedings.

Committee Introduction

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can

exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

History

The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees was established by the United Nations General Assembly on 14th December in 1950. UNHCR was originally given a three-year mandate to help the 1.2 million European refugees that were left homeless after World War II, but as the refugee crisis grew around the world, the mandate was extended to five years. The end of World War II coincided with the beginning of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Several events – including Mao Zedong’s victory in China, the Berlin Blockade, the separation of Germany, and the start of the Korean War – made the international community realize that the problem of refugees was not a temporary issue. Every crisis meant new outflows of refugees. The UN General Assembly discussed the formation of a body with the power to raise funds and disperse them to refugees. A UNHCR Statute was adopted on 14 December 1950. It was defined by two primary functions: first, to provide international protection for refugees; and second, to seek permanent solutions to the problem of refugees. Although UNHCR does not have the mandate to negotiate peace settlements, it can help governments facilitate voluntary repatriation or hosting of refugees. On 28 July 1951, the UN held an international conference that produced the Convention on the Status of Refugees. The Convention defined the term refugee according to the concept of “well-founded fear of persecution.” After the Soviet Union suppressed a Hungarian uprising in 1956, there was a huge outpouring of refugees from Hungary. This became the first refugee crisis for the newly formed UNHCR, which worked with those who were fleeing political repression. It was also the first time UNHCR collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. During this crisis, UNHCR protected refugees who fled to Austria and to Yugoslavia, as well as those resettling in 35 other countries all over the world, with voluntary repatriation of some to Hungary. The crisis and UNHCR’s successful management and assistance caused the General Assembly to label refugees as a global issue and to create the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme to advise the High Commissioner. Thus, the successful protection of Hungarian refugees marked UNHCR’s transition from a small UN body to a larger organization with more responsibilities and enhanced international prestige. It should also be noted that in 2003, to give more grounding to the continuous work of the organization, the UN General Assembly revised and eliminated the requirement for the UNHCR to renew their mandate after a number of years. This evolution contributes to the strength of the organization in tackling emergencies as well as crisis which require long term commitments. Today, UNHCR is one of the world’s largest humanitarian organizations. During its more than 60 years of operation, UNHCR has earned two Nobel Peace Prizes, one in 1954 and the other in 1981.

Governance, Membership, and Organization

As a body of the United Nations Programmes and Funds, the UNHCR reports directly to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly (ECOSOC) through the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner serves as the head of the UNHCR and as such, is responsible for the decisions, actions and direction of the organization; presently, Filippo Grandi is the 11th High Commissioner for Refugees. Furthermore, the work of the High Commissioner is supported by the Deputy High Commissioner and Assistant High Commissioners for Protection and Operations. The UNHCR is governed by the 85 Member States that make up its Executive Committee who are elected from; “the widest possible geographical basis from those states with a

demonstrated interest in, and devotion to, the solution of the refugee problem.”. The Executive Committee meets annually in Geneva with the UNHCR, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners to address and advice on issues of international protection, administrative and other procedural matters. In addition, the Executive Committee reviews the UNHCR’s budget and financial requirements as well as has the power to approve the biennial programs and budget of the UNHCR. To ensure balance of power and proper conduct of the UNHCR, the Inspector General’s Office (IGO) has the responsibility to evaluate the management and measures to prevent mismanagement of the UNHCR and also, investigates reported cases of misconduct which can potentially impact negatively on the organization.

Mandate and Functions

The backbone of the UNHCR’s mandate can be found on article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which highlights the right to seek asylum in another country. Hence, the organization has been committed since its initial directive in 1900s to date, championing humanitarian issues and the international protection of displaced persons as stated in its mandate; the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1950). Essentially, mandate of the UNHCR is to provide: ‘international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees...’. The mandate of the UNHCR is supported by several other documents which extends to various issues during and after war periods; the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, assists in defining who a refugee is, their rights, obligations of refugees as well as influencing legislations in Africa and Latin America. Notably, the adoption of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, has assisted the organization in expanding the initial 1951 Convention and UNHCR’s mandate in order to cater for a much broader group of persons who need protection and aid during and aftermath of wars. The UNHCR has evolved since its establishment to embrace initiatives and providing the necessary budget to assist refugees, stateless persons, reintegration programs, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) based on their unique situations. This function allows the organization to emphasize on reintegration, relief-development and the right to seek asylum in another country to help reduce the plight of affected persons. There is also the promotion and policing of the human rights of refugees and international refugee agreements to ensure that countries are knowledgeable in dealing with these affected groups. These functions are further solidified not only by the organization’s mandate but also, the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Due to the diverse nature of the UNHCR’s works, the organization collaborates with several UN sister organizations such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) among others who provide services which are either similar or complimentary to the mandates and functions of the UNHCR. Furthermore, partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become another effective way for the UNHCR to expand its outreach towards humanitarian needs of persons who need such aid. As well, there is the pooling of resources and funds which goes a long way to ensure that the set objectives are obtainable.

The UNHCR recognizing the benefit in working with NGOs engages in annual consultations with such groups to exchange ideas, best practices and building towards a safer world. The Global Humanitarian Platform's Principles of Partnership was adopted in 2007 by the UNHCR to this end to solidify the value in collaborating with various stakeholders to address wars and humanitarian issues. In addition, despite the lead role of the UNHCR in refugee issues, the organization does not have the sole power to decide who a refugee is or have a distinct mandate when it comes to IDPs

however, what they can do is to offer their high level of expertise and advice to governments on such issues which affects refugees, example, implementation of refugee laws and how to protect such groups.

UNHCR's competence and responsibilities have broadened considerably since it was established, moving from the Statute, through good offices and assistance, to protection and solutions. The class of beneficiaries has likewise moved from those defined in the Statute, through those outside competence assisted on a good offices basis, to those defined in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and directives of the Executive Committee, arriving finally at a general class of persons whose protection is of concern to the international community, namely, refugees in the sense of the UNHCR Statute and the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, other refugees as covered by regional treaties and arrangements, certain groups of 'externally' displaced persons, IDPs, stateless persons, and others 'of concern' to UNHCR and for whom the General Assembly or States may request appropriate interventions.

UNHCR's Current Work and Upcoming Challenges

The recent works of the UNHCR which have taken place recently have been based on strengthening approaches in international protection in terms of how Member States can play instrumental roles in this area, international cooperation and response mechanisms in assisting various groups such as refugees, IDPs and, stateless persons during crisis periods. The UNHCR has been committed to reviewing financial resources which are used in these humanitarian works, this helps to; '...to influence policy in favour of persons of concern; to change behaviour and attitudes...'. This is a strategic way for the organization to advance discussions with the international community, NGOs and partners. The UN Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants held in New York in September 2016 has been described as 'a game changer for refugee protection and for migrants...'. This plays a significant role in showcasing the importance the UNHCR and other stakeholders are attaching to addressing the challenges faced by displaced persons. As a result, 193 Member States of the UN have indicated their support of the declaration which addresses the rights of refugees and migrants, racism, exploitation, women and children, supporting countries which receive large numbers of refugees and migrants and supporting the ideas of these displaced persons. The major challenges the UNHCR deals with is finding a permanent solution to end stateless as cases of mass displacement, wars, conflicts and the financial capacity to help rebuild the lives of those affected cannot be controlled; over the past five years some countries have been experiencing continual conflicts.

To date, over 50 million refugees have benefited from the UNHCR with much of this work accomplished in the 130 countries which the commission assists with the help of a staff size of more than 10000 people. There has also been a recognizable increase in the initial budget from USD \$300,000 to USD \$7.7 billion as of 2017.

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<http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>

Understanding the Agenda

"Climate change is the defining challenge of our times: a challenge which interacts with and reinforces the other global megatrends such as population growth, urbanization, and growing food, water and energy insecurity. It is a challenge which is adding to the scale and complexity of human displacement; and a challenge that has important implications for the maintenance of international peace and security."

– António Guterres, former High Commissioner for Refugees (in an address to the UN Security Council, 2011)



Agenda: "Protecting Populations Displaced by Climate Change and Disasters"

In order to effectively understand an agenda and its nuances well, it is very important to try and understand the meaning of each word in the agenda and subsequently break it down on those lines. We have tried and done that for you below. Feel free to bring to light any other different view or understanding of the same in the committee.

1. Protecting: This essentially is to be understood in its basic literal meaning. Just make sure that whatever arguments you present in the committee, they should shed light on how

effective/immediate/long-term protection of the affected population will be brought about. Addressing the "HOW" part of it is very important.

2. **Populations Displaced:** The displacement of people refers to the forced movement of people from their locality or environment and occupational activities. It is a form of social change caused by a number of factors, the most common being armed conflict. Natural disasters, famine, development and economic changes may also be a cause of displacement.

In regard to population displacement resulting from development there are typically two types: direct displacement, which leads to actual displacement of people from their locations and indirect displacement, which leads to a loss of livelihood. Forced to leave the home region to which they are attached and for which they have the knowledge to make a living most effectively, displaced populations often become impoverished.

Who all can be covered under the term displaced population?

It is extremely important to take into account the reasons behind an individual or a group's decision to move from their host country. Once you do that, you will be able to ascertain whether a person is to be treated as a refugee or a migrant or as someone internally displaced or might even be stateless. We do that because UNHCR as a body in itself distinguishes amongst these for more effective policy direction. We have articulated the basic definition of all below.

Refugee:

Article 1 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the 1967 Protocol, defines a refugee as this:

"A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.."

The protection of refugees has many aspects. These include safety from being returned to the dangers they have fled; access to asylum procedures that are fair and efficient; and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected to allow them to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution. States bear the primary responsibility for this protection. UNHCR therefore works closely with governments, advising and supporting them as needed to implement their responsibilities.

Migrants: A uniform legal definition of the term 'migrant' does not exist at the international level. UNHCR recognizes as persons who mostly choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.

Some policymakers, international organizations, and media outlets understand and use the word 'migrant' as an umbrella term to cover both migrants and refugees. For instance, global statistics on international migration typically use a definition of 'international migration' that would include many asylum-seeker and refugee movements.

In public discussion, however, this practice can easily lead to confusion and can also have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. Thus, UNHCR uses the two terms separately.

Internally Displaced Persons: While there are no official definitions of an internally displaced person, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement set by the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) holds internally displaced persons to be "persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee, or leave, their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, and habitual violations of human rights, as well as natural or man-made disasters involving one or more of these elements, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border".

Accordingly, the internally displaced are people who are forced to flee their homes, often for the very same reasons as refugees - war, civil conflict, political strife, and gross human rights abuse - but who remain within their own country and do not cross an international border. They are therefore not eligible for protection under the same international system as refugees. Also, there is no single international body entrusted with their protection and assistance. However, the primary mechanism for the coordination of humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s cluster approach. Under the "cluster approach", UNHCR leads the Global Protection Cluster.

Stateless: Article 1 of the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons defines a stateless person as "a person who is not considered a national by any state under the operation of its law". Should a state cease to exist, citizenship of that state would cease, as there would no longer be a state of which a person could be a national.

This is relevant to our discussion as climate change and disasters can very soon be the most important causes of statelessness. Example: The entire populations of low-lying States such as the Maldives, Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands may in future be obliged to leave their own country as a result of climate change. Moreover, the existence of their State as such may be threatened. Entire populations of affected states could thus become stateless.

NOTE: Discussion under our agenda would cover all of the above-mentioned sets. Even migrants may move to alleviate significant hardships that arise from natural disasters, famine, or extreme poverty, though will not usually be considered refugees under international law. They are termed as Forced Migrants by many social scientists and organizations like the IOM. However, the UNHCR avoids using the term 'forced migration' to refer to refugee movements and other forms of displacement, in order to avoid confusion. And despite the fact that Migrants or IDPs do not come under the mandate of the UNHCR, the body still recognizes their needs and uses its expertise to protect and assist them from years.

Climate Change and Disasters:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992), which serves as the international legal foundation governing issues relating to climate change, defines climate change as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the

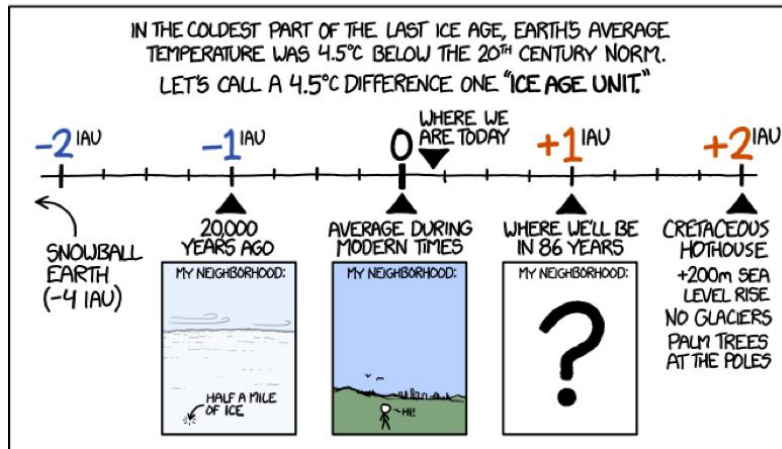
composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability over comparable time periods.” Again, just understand them by their basic literal definitions and attributes. Just keep in mind that disasters can include man-made, natural etc.

We hope everything that has been mentioned above helps you to understand the agenda in its entirety and equips you with a sense of understanding that shall come handy when we try to delve into it further.

Introduction

One of the biggest humanitarian crises facing the international community today is forced displacement, including disaster displacement. Climate change, in addition to other environmental and natural disasters, has become a major driver of migration; one person is displaced every second because of a natural disaster. Climate change accelerates environmental degradation and the occurrence of natural disasters which adversely affect livelihoods, public health, food security, and water availability. These impacts can lead to population movements within and across borders. Indeed, the number of internationally recorded natural disasters has doubled from 200 to 400 per year between 1998 and 2008, whereby 90% of them are climate related. Therefore, natural disasters such as floods or storms displaced an average of 21.5 million people per year since 2008, 19 whereby also droughts or coastal erosion force more and more people to flee. Since 2009, an estimated one person every second has been displaced by a disaster, with an average of 22.5 million people displaced by climate- or weather-related events since 2008 (IDMC 2015). Disasters and slow onsets, such as droughts in Somalia in 2011 and 2012, floods in Pakistan between 2010 and 2012, and the earthquake in Nepal in 2015, can leave huge numbers of people traumatized without shelter, clean water and basic supplies. By 2050, forecasts show that anything from 25 million to 1 billion people will be on the move because of environmental conditions, making this sort of displacement and migration one of the key challenges of the 21st century. As predictions grow year by year, countries are already beginning to prepare for the drastic changes to both land and peoples. The small island nations of the Pacific, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and others, are preparing for the eventual disappearance of their country. Similarly, countries like India and Bangladesh are preparing for the displacement of thousands, possibly millions, due to rising sea levels threatening coastal populations. There are also several global scale changes that point towards the evidence of global climate change, including shifting water movement, air flow, melting ice caps, and extreme weather. All of these compound to a looming danger of mass population displacement, one which current infrastructure and technologies are not prepared to handle. Therefore, the international community needs to find immediate answers to the complex challenge and growing dimension of environmental migration.

WITHOUT PROMPT, AGGRESSIVE LIMITS ON CO₂ EMISSIONS, THE EARTH WILL LIKELY WARM BY AN AVERAGE OF 4°-5°C BY THE CENTURY'S END.
HOW BIG A CHANGE IS THAT?



Climate change has three main impacts: sea level rise, increasing and decreasing water availability, and extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods. While environmental conditions always had impacts on human mobility, climate change is expected to increase the extent of human movement. Slow onset natural disasters (droughts or coastal erosion linked to sea level rise) and sudden-onset natural disasters (floods or storms), affect human "livelihood patterns" differently and lead to different types of displacement. Migration often is an adaptation strategy of affected populations to cope with the effects of climate change, when environmental degradation, a process where climate change impacts and natural disasters affect human livelihood negatively, begins. In this early stage of environmental degradation, migration due to environmental and climate conditions is likely to be temporary or seasonal. Yet, when environmental degradation becomes drastic or irrevocable, migration can become permanent and lead to internal or international displacement and relocation.

Unplanned urbanization and camp settings can lead to exploitation of natural resources and to further destruction of people's livelihoods, which may provoke subsequent migration. Due to its multidimensionality, environmental migration is connected to many development policies, to issues of emergency preparedness and humanitarian response, to human security, as well as to urban and land use planning. To mitigate forced climate change-related displacement, the international community needs to address its root causes, such as low resilience and social and economic vulnerabilities of people. At the same time, international humanitarian support for people migrating due to environmental conditions needs to be strengthened. Most importantly, comprehensive international environmental migration management- and settlement strategies need to be endorsed to globally and nationally manage and govern cross-border and internal environmental migration.

Traditionally, migration from such disasters has been perceived as "voluntary", but increasingly such movement is also being seen as "forced". Indeed, long-standing international definitions of forced migrants and the international systems of protection for them may have to expand to accommodate the many different patterns of migration emerging. The effects of climate change on natural resources, may spark conflict with other communities, as an increasing number of people compete for a decreasing amount of resources.

History of the Concept

Analysis of climate change-induced displacement can be traced back to earlier deliberations on environmental displacement, which were particularly prominent during the 1990s. Though the idea of an 'ecological refugee' was first mentioned in 1948, its more recent and first 'official' derivation was a UNEP report in 1985 by El-Hinnawi. He used the term 'environmental refugee' to highlight the potentially devastating impacts of unchecked development, pollution and so on. He did this in much the same way that environmental lobby groups today use the language of 'climate refugees' to draw attention to the most deleterious aspects of carbon emissions.

During the 1980s and 1990s, climate change was predominantly conceived as a scientific and environmental issue. However, in 1990, the potential impacts of climate change on human migration were identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It noted that millions of people would likely be uprooted by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and agricultural disruption, and that climate change might necessitate consideration of 'migration and resettlement outside of national boundaries'. In the 2000s, the social and humanitarian consequences of climate change began to be more readily identified. The International Federation for the Red Cross created a climate change centre in 2002 to 'better understand and address the risks of climate change, in particular in the context of disaster risk reduction, disaster management and health and care programs, with a focus on the most vulnerable people'.

In 2005, the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights adopted a resolution on 'The legal implications of the disappearance of States and other territories for environmental reasons, including the implications for the human rights of their residents, with particular reference to the rights of indigenous peoples'. It called on the Commission of Human Rights to appoint a Special Rapporteur to prepare 'a comprehensive study on the legal implications of the disappearance of States and other territories for environmental reasons, including the implications for the human rights of their residents', but this never occurred. Since then, the issue has gained further momentum, with an explosion of literature and increasing institutional and NGO engagement in the issue since the mid-2000s.

In 2009, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2009 examined the links between human rights and climate change, including a whole section on displacement. In the same year, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on 'Climate Change and Its Possible Security Implications', requesting the Security Council to provide a comprehensive report. The resultant report contains a short section on population displacement and migration. The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population compiled a report on environmentally-induced migration and displacement in 2008. In mid-2009, Kofi Annan, in his role as President of the Global Humanitarian Forum, issued a report which described 'millions of people' being 'uprooted or permanently on the move as a result' of climate change, with '[m]any more millions' to follow. The issue has also been taken up in the UNFCCC negotiations. UNHCR's engagement with the issue was precipitated by the High Commissioner, Antonio Guterres, who first raised his concerns about climate change-related movement at UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting in 2007. He told States that: 'We see more and more people forced to move because of extreme deprivation, environmental degradation and climate change'

As a result of the High Commissioner's lead, UNHCR produced its first policy paper in late 2008, and other publications since. It has also become more actively engaged through networks such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; in commissioning research on climate change-related movement;

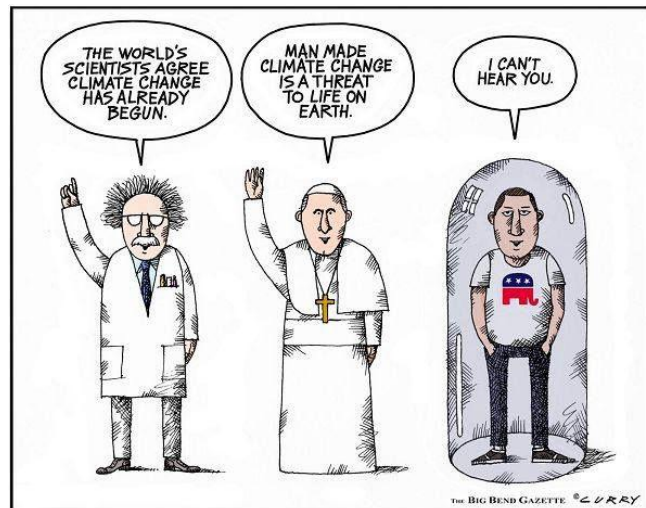
and raising it as a normative protection gap at the 2010 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. There remains no authoritative international institution responsible for governing climate related migration. Indeed, the issue cuts across several areas of international governance— migration and asylum, the environment, development, human rights, and humanitarian aid and assistance— each of which is represented by a number of different UN and other bodies.

UNHCR is uniquely placed to address the protection dimension of movement, and to assist the international debate through its expertise on forced migration and the nature of population movements.

Current Issues

The extent to which climate change displaces people is often overlooked. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently reported that, "By 2050, a majority of U.S. coastal areas are likely to be threatened by 30 or more days of flooding each year due to dramatically accelerating impacts from sea level rise". Additionally, according to the UNHCR an annual average of 21.5 million people has been forcibly displaced by climate related sudden onset hazards – such as floods, storms, wildfires, extreme temperature each year since 2008. With temperatures expected to keep rising and more humans on the planet than ever, it is inevitable that the number of people that are affected will continue to rise.

It is important to remember that a committee, coming up with a plan to deal with these natural disasters in advance will reduce the loss of life and monetary damage. Heat waves, diseases like malaria and yellow fever transported by a rise in mosquito populations, weather-related disasters, rising sea levels, and desertification are just a few of the ways in which people can be, sometimes permanently, forced to flee. Some of these issues are 'evolutionary', taking hold over an extended period of time—and with time to be fixed. For instance, rising sea levels-- unlike a hurricane-- don't inflict damage in the span of a night. Instead, they gradually create an issue that will still has the consequence of displacing people. because we can observe rising sea levels-- knowing that it may be months or even years before there is immediate danger-- we can take that time to find solutions for the inhabitants. Longer term, permanent solutions can be created, and instead of the immediacy of a refugee crisis, we instead are left with a slower 'migration' of sorts. On the other hand, heat waves and cyclones can strike in an instant with a massive shock wave of damage both in physical and human capital.



Developing countries-- which are often much more affected by climate change to begin with-- often don't have the resources to recover or replace this capital, which then is a further detriment to their growth as a nation. The rise of desertification in some countries such as Mali are making regions uninhabitable due to lack of resources like water to farm, so they must seek refuge in other parts of the country or leave the country altogether. Many populous nations that sit in geographically disaster likely places are the hardest hit in terms of this capital. Some Asian nations, many of which are both densely populated and situated in areas prone to monsoons, cyclones, and other natural disasters, are examples of this. However, this can also be a great detriment to smaller, island nations that can lose great swaths of their population in one fell swoop— exemplified by both Vanuatu and Tuvalu, who, due to 2015's Cyclone Pam had an overall of estimated \$450 million in damage and over 3,300 displaced.

It is widely estimated that climate change will create 150 million refugees in the next forty years, thus demanding from the global community to have to have a plan ready to deal with these refugees if the effects of global warming cannot be mitigated or reversed. The "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers" reports that, "Climate change is projected to undermine food security," as well as that, "Climate change is projected to reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources in most dry subtropical regions intensifying competition for water among sectors." Persons displaced by climate change and natural disasters is not simply an issue of the future, but of the present and past. A five-year drought preceding the Syrian Civil war displaced 1.5 million people. (UNHCR). The drought was one of many significant factors that led to the rise in anger against the Assad Regime and ultimately all out civil war that we see today. Many of these mass events are overlooked and their consequences undermined.

International Legal Framework

The term "environmental migrant" and its legal status The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change already determined in 1990 that "one of the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration". Even though the international community has known that environmental conditions will affect human migration extensively, there is no internationally accepted definition for persons moving for environmental or climate reasons.

Yet, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has put forward a working definition for environmental migrants:

“Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.”

Migration caused by environmental circumstances does not fall within one specific legal classification of the existing international legal framework. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1), adopted in October 2016 by the UN General Assembly at the UN Refugee Summit, reinforces the definition of a refugee “as a person who is outside his or her country of origin due to well-founded fear of persecution (...)” and who needs “protection against the harm feared”, in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Even though the New York Declaration recognizes that “there may be persons who are forced to flee (...) in the context of sudden- or slow-onset disasters, or in the context of effects of climate change”, they are not recognized as refugees in international law.

Consequently, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organizations do not talk of “environmental refugees” and rather, use the terms climate-related displacement or disaster displacement. Essentially, the legal status of environmental migrants is dependent on whether they move within their home country (internal migration) or migrate across borders (international migration). Internal displaced environmental migrants are protected by International humanitarian and human rights law, as reflected in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2). In this case, governments are responsible for the people displaced within their borders.⁵³ Yet, when they lack the capabilities to respond adequately, governments can request international humanitarian support and assistance. However, there are legal gaps concerning cross-border displaced persons due to disasters, as there are no widely accepted rules that govern the environmental migrant’s entry and stay in another country.

As members of this committee, it will be imperative for you to delve into these legal gaps and recommend on how we can deal with these effectively. And yes, even though there might not be any concrete set frameworks established, still a lot of lessons can be learned from other regional and international instruments and programmes already in place. Refer to the next section for an insight into those.

Latest International Efforts Aimed at Addressing Displacement due to Climate Change and Disasters



In its 2015 report *UNHCR, the Environment and Climate Change*, UNHCR argues that planned relocation can protect vulnerable populations from climate risks and impacts through settling them in safer locations. To support States in protecting their populations against the impacts of disasters and environmental change, including the influences of climate change, through planned relocation, UNHCR launched the *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation* in 2015

By agreeing on the Sendai Framework, the international community builds up resilience of communities against natural disasters with the goal to mitigate climate change's negative effects on human lives. The 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction focuses on a "people-centered prevented approach to disaster" to enhance the safety of persons and communities in regards to DRR. Over the next 15 years, the goal of the Sendai Framework is to reduce the total amount of disaster risk mortality, disaster-related damage, and to strengthen DRR strategies within governing states to improve warning systems. The goal of the Sendai Framework is also to bolster DRR by encouraging greater international cooperation on this topic.

One of the major strategies is the Yokohama Strategy. The Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action (1994) and the Hyogo Framework to Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (2005) are two related documents that extensively address and recommend efforts in advancing disaster risk reduction (DRR).

The Yokohama Strategy focused on DRR efforts at all levels of the international community. The Hyogo Framework worked to build on the weaknesses of Yokohama by specifically addressing cross-border disaster displacement concerns, identifying DRR successes and risk factors, and organizational legal, and policy frameworks, among other provisions. While neither the Yokohama Strategy nor the Hyogo Framework addresses DRR in relation to cross-border disaster displacement effectively, their impact on the discussion of DRR has been formative and set the foundation for future efforts.

Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) plays a crucial role to prevent and manage forced environmental migration. UN

General Assembly resolution 70/1, Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), includes targets and goals addressing climate migration and disaster displacement. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the interrelated issues developing states face related to international cross-border migration. In this vein, it recognizes the need for international cooperation for safe and orderly migration of displaced persons and has marked 2030 as its goal in enhancing the resilience to climate change and environmental disasters to decrease displacement and related mortality.

Particularly relevant to the topic are SDGs 10, 13 and 15, as well as SDG target 11.5, that address the adverse effects and “complex nexus” of climate change and environmental migration. SDG 10 aims to “Reduce inequalities in and among countries” and thereby also addresses States’ inequalities concerning unevenly distributed effects of migration. Target 10.7 aims “to facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. This target is therefore essential for the international community’s efforts to create strategies that strive to facilitate managed migration. SDG target 11.5 has the purpose to significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected by disasters with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations and thus reinforces Member States’ measures to improve countries’, communities’ and peoples’ resilience towards natural disasters. SDG 13 aims to “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”. As climate change is the “biggest threat to development”, SDG 13 builds the basis for enhanced international cooperation to contain climate change as a cause of migration due to destruction of human livelihoods, development and economic prospects. Corresponding with SDG 13, SDG 15 aims to “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. As migration is extensively caused by desertification and land degradation, it is essential to strengthen livelihoods in drylands and areas that are affected by desertification.

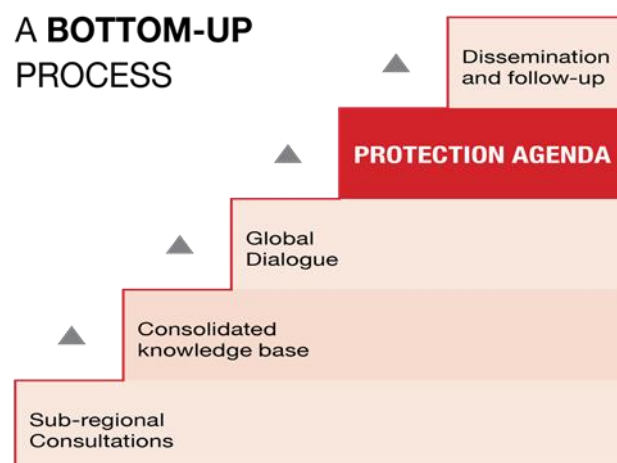
The Paris Agreement was established within the UNFCCC. It aims to mitigate global warming, its impacts on livelihoods, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change. The parties of the Agreement request the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage to establish a task force on displacement. This task force shall “develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change” and plans to launch them in fall 2018.

The New York Declaration connects the impacts of climate change and migration, referencing the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Member States recognize the need to protect migrants and refugees and the “important contribution made by migrants and migration to development in countries of origin, transit and destination”.

Moreover, at the Refugee Summit, the international community announced a closer legal and working relationship between the UN and International Organization for Migration (IOM), the leading agency on migration globally, making it part of the UN system. IOM has a crucial role in developing comprehensive migration management approaches, tackling the complex linkages between climate change and migration with the aim to decrease vulnerability of populations which are exposed to environmental risk factors. Thus, IOM's central objectives in managing environmental migration are to prevent forced migration resulting from environmental factors, to provide assistance to affected populations in case of forced migration, and to facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change.

The most essential commitment of the New York Declaration is the creation of a Comprehensive refugee response framework and a Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The Global compact is going to be the first inter-governmentally negotiated, although non-binding, agreement that covers all scopes of international migration. It is aimed to improve the regulation on migration, to address the challenges associated with today's migration. The compact is consistent with SDG target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda, in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. It is aimed to enhance global governance and coordination on international migration and to present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility, as well as to set out a series of actionable commitments, follow-ups, and reviews among Member States.

One very important initiative is the Nansen Initiative, which is a state-led consultative forum that created the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change. The agenda promotes efforts to reduce and mitigate the effects of disaster displacement and the enhanced protection of migrants through humanitarian action, awareness, and data collection. The Nansen Initiative also discusses current practices states are utilizing and solutions in the gaps of those practices. The Platform for Disaster Displacement (PDD) was created in 2016 to implement the recommendations in the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda. To this end, the PDD supports the recent creation of the Guide to Effective Practices for RCM Member Countries, which was adopted by the Member States of the Regional Conference on Migration. The PDD and the IOM also attended the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which included discussions on intervention in areas impacted by disaster displacement, DRR strategies in society engagement, and the collection of disaster displacement data at local and regional levels.



Other regional frameworks include the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework, centered around the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is also central to this topic. The framework not only focuses on global climate change efforts by enhancing DRR strategies such as risk assessment and management, but also works towards enhancing the understanding, coordination, and cooperation on climate migration as well as planned relocation at national, regional, and international levels. There have also been significant developments at the regional level. During the 2006 African Union Executive Council Ninth Ordinary session in Gambia, African Heads of State adopted The Migration Policy Framework for Africa, which provides strategies and solutions for migration issues in Africa. The document identified poverty and environmental

degradation as key drivers of migration on the continent and recommended that African states protect their environments to prevent desert and soil degradation.

Another regional document, the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, acknowledges the need to enhance protections for climate and disaster-related migrants. The Declaration mentions the impact of climate change and natural disasters on persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and proposes several regional programs that would enhance protection for vulnerable migrants, detect situations that would produce displacement, and promote regional dialogue to support migration management. During the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the UN Secretary-General stressed the need for national and regional institutions to come together in addressing cross-border disaster displacement. The World Humanitarian Summit recognized the need to shift from reacting to cross-border disaster displacement to reducing risk and increasing financing and planning for natural disasters. In addition, one of the products of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the report of the Secretary-General (71/353), emphasized the need for the international community to bolster its responsibility in protecting persons impacted by cross-border disaster displacement, especially women and children.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is one example of a non-governmental organization that has undertaken efforts to assist cross-border migrants during and after environmental crises. The ICRC has provided protection to vulnerable migrants and restores family links for displaced persons. Recently, the ICRC has reunited families in the case of the 2016 Ecuador earthquake and has provided food and shelter in the Somalia's current drought crisis.

Role of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR has always and continue to play an instrumental role in assisting to reduce and manage disaster displacement. UNHCR is involved in operational efforts to assist with cross-border disaster displacement, which includes their efforts in the wake of the Haiti earthquake where they provided tents to the citizens of Haiti crossing into the Dominican Republic. In addition, UNHCR recently conducted a Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction given to government officials and other actors engaged in this issue to improve their operational capacity.

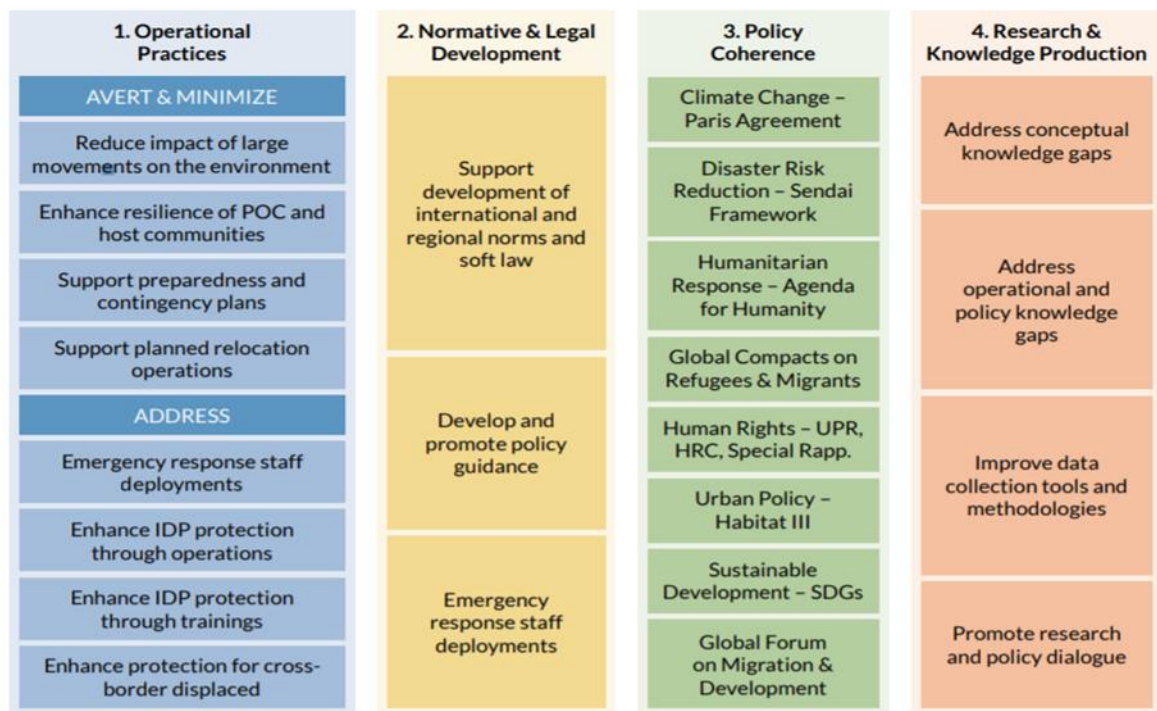
The engagement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on displacement in the context of disasters and climate change extends back to the mid-1990s, and advanced more concretely after 2000, both with regard to policy development and operational responses around the provision of protection and assistance to persons displaced in disaster and climate change contexts.

UNHCR's 2017-2021 Strategic Directions includes commitments in relation to climate change and disaster displacement. These include commitments to:

- "Protect" people in different regions of the world, including by "contributing to advancing legal, policy and practical solutions for the protection of people displaced by the effects of climate change and natural disasters, in recognition of the acute humanitarian needs associated with displacement of this kind, and its relationship to conflict and instability"
- "Respond", including by "contributing to any inter-agency response to emergencies resulting from natural disasters, with a particular focus on providing protection leadership, where the three criteria of field presence, a government request, and inter-agency agreement are met".

Aligned with these strategic directions, UNHCR's work on climate change and disaster displacement fall into four areas (see diagram below):

1. Field operations to avert, minimize and to address internal and cross-border disaster displacement.
2. Legal advice, guidance and normative development at national, regional and international levels to support enhanced protection of the rights of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change.
3. Policy coherence to ensure that issues of climate change and disaster displacement are effectively mainstreamed across other relevant policy arenas.
4. Research and knowledge production to fill gaps that underpin this operational and policy work.



Climate Change/Natural Disasters and Human Rights

Human rights and climate change were linked for the first time in 2005, when the Inuit people submitted a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights alleging that climate change has had severe impact on the lives, health, culture and livelihoods of the indigenous people in the arctic. In 2007, representatives of small island developing states adopted the Male Declaration on the Human Dimensions of Global Climate Change. The Declaration called on the UNFCCC to seek cooperation with the UN human rights bodies, requested the OHCHR to conduct a study on the relationship between human rights and climate change, and demanded the HRC to engage in a debate on the issue in its next session. A year later, the HRC reacted to the requests of the Male Declaration and adopted resolution 7/23 on “Human Rights and Climate Change” by consensus, forcing a wide array of entities within the international system to address the issue. With this resolution, the international human rights framework for the first time explicitly addressed the relationship between human rights and climate change. Drawing on the Male Declaration, it unequivocally states that climate change “poses an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities around the world and has implications for the full enjoyment of human rights.”

Both the 2009 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Report 10/61 and Human Rights Council Resolution 10/4 specified “the right to life, the right to adequate food, the right to the

highest attainable standard of health, the right to adequate housing, the right to self-determination, and human rights obligations related to safe drinking water and sanitation” as rights that are most directly threatened by climate change. This was reflected by an extensive mapping report of the specific rights that are threatened by climate change compiled by the Independent Expert on human rights and the environment, which is a collection of all relevant parts of 14 different human rights treaties that relate to the issue of climate change. The increase of natural disasters caused by climate change has devastating effects on the enjoyment of the right to life, especially in developing countries.

A number of observed or projected climate change effects as identified by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) directly threaten human lives: heat-waves, floods, storms, and drought can all directly or indirectly cause disease, injury, malnutrition, and death. In order to address displacements and forced migration caused by climate change and natural disasters, the HRC has called for a human rights-based approach towards disaster management and risk reduction. As one of the most basic human rights, the right to food is severely threatened by projected decrease in crop productivity as a result of climate change. How extreme climate events threaten livelihoods and food security has also been addressed by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, demonstrating the need for cross-mandate action. Closely linked to this is the right to a high standard of health. Climate change is projected to increase malnutrition and injury due to extreme weather phenomena, while rising temperatures are affecting the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria. This will affect the health of millions of people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. The communities that are most at risk are those which are already suffering from poor health conditions and a lack of adaptive capacities. Confronting health issues in relation to climate change, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that not only addresses climate change adaptation measures, but also non-climate related factors such as the general public health conditions of vulnerable communities.

Protection of Displaced Populations During Relocation

Efforts Between 2008 and 2015, 15 million people annually were relocated or evicted from their country of origin because of the direct impacts of a natural disaster. When people are evicted or voluntarily relocate from their country of origin across international borders due to a natural disaster, they do so in search of safety and security. When people relocate across borders to another country, they stand to lose their cultural, psychological, and community ties and attachments. When relocation occurs, either initiated by persons themselves or by the government through planned relocation, people may also lose livelihood opportunities due to different markets or lack of opportunity in their new host state. In the case of slow-onset disasters, such as rising sea levels, governments are more likely and able to utilize planned relocation strategies. For example, in the Mekong River Delta in Viet Nam where the rise in sea level resulted in the degradation of agriculture lands, the government was able to resettle people with the government’s “Living with Floods program; the program was successful through the cooperation of local communities, country of origin, and neighbouring countries of destinations.



Where planned relocations are not in effect, people often face significant challenges at borders. Since climate induced migrants cannot claim refugee status, they are often deemed inadmissible to other states at the border. At state's borders, cross-border displaced individuals may encounter issues like not meeting visa requirements, barring them entry into the country. Where migrants are able to enter the country with official authorization, their access to services may be curtailed due to their status within the state. In these cases, migrants may face significant barriers in finding adequate housing, education, health services, and employment opportunities. Some states have sought to overcome these challenges by granting temporary visas; in the case of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Brazil allowed affected residents to apply for humanitarian visas that spanned from two months to five years. Even with these visas, in 2012 Brazil was receiving a large influx of irregular migrants from Haiti, indicating that the needs of migrants outweighed the number of approved humanitarian visas. In response, Brazil's National Council expanded the program and improved the terms of the visas, lasting up to five years and allowing holders free movement in and out of Brazil. However, humanitarian visas are not always similarly equipped with full protections and rights and thus cannot act as comprehensive sufficient instruments.

Enhanced Protection for Women and Children Crossing Borders

Some vulnerable displaced groups are more likely to be subject to marginalization and abuse in cross-border relocations. During natural disasters, the human rights of displaced persons are more likely to be violated which makes them vulnerable to violence, human trafficking and smuggling, and discrimination. This can especially be said for women and children, particularly in regions where they have less access to wealth, education, and other resources. Increased environmental degradation, reduced access to natural resources, and the general effects of natural disasters are often factors in a groups decision to migrate across international borders. Women migrate more frequently than men and face an increased likelihood of being exploited and trafficked while traveling across international borders to their destinations. While crossing borders, women are also more susceptible to sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, some women may not have access to

direct aid and assistance during and after traveling across borders, and when they do, the assistance may not appropriately meet the needs of women, such as temporary relief camps that lack in adequate safety and health services.

However, any programs or initiative aimed at addressing the issue of vulnerable groups may be difficult to establish or implement effectively, as the term “vulnerable migrant/refugee” has not yet been clearly defined internationally. While women and children experience particular specific vulnerabilities, the definition of “vulnerable migrant/refugee” will likely also be inclusive of the diverse forms of vulnerabilities to specific exploitations and abuses, such as indigenous populations and persons with disabilities. Thus, it is an imperative to address this aspect of the overall framework effectively.

Advancing Disaster Risk Reduction(DRR)

The risk of being displaced because of a natural disaster has increased at twice the rate of population growth since the 1970s. Since the mid-1980s, the number of mega-events, which are natural disasters that displace more than three million people, has increased and is responsible for the growing rate of cross-border disaster displacement, a trend that is predicted to continue.

DRR and resilience-building can assist in reducing climate-induced displacement by establishing proactive solutions for people living in areas that experience the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and natural hazards. In DRR programs, states are responsible for anticipating disasters, including identifying disaster-prone areas and assessing the impact of natural disasters and hazards on affected populations; by doing so, states can reduce vulnerability and exposure, and thereby enhance resilience. The same development policies that enhance resilience can also strengthen the capacity of states to host cross-border disaster displaced persons without overburdening their resources and infrastructure. While these processes are important, many current policies do not reflect the realities of disaster displacement, causing states to enact inadequate plans and policies.

Additionally, there is a serious lack of investment in these initiatives in many states due to constrained resources, lack of understanding, or more pressing priorities. Another challenge is the current gap between DRR and development policy in many developing countries. By isolating these actions, states operate in a binary framework where DRR and development initiatives may be framed competitively, when in fact they are complementary and may be most effective when pursued together.

Case Studies

Island Nation of Kiribati:

There are already several cases where climate change has become a major issue within the past two decades, threatening the livelihoods of the people affected and thus causing forced displacement. The first example comes from the small nation of Kiribati. The island nation is “one of the world’s most ecologically fragile states. The vast majority of its islands are coral atolls and they are ecologically and historically important to the local population. Kiribati contains 715 miles of coastline, however, due rising global temperatures and consequently rising sea levels, more violent storms, and erosion, some officials and researchers believe that around 55 percent of available land

will disappear by 2050. This combined with a declining population, the government of Kiribati began to utilize a strict number of measures to help slow the damage: Aggressive projects to adapt to the changes caused by this rapid land loss. These projects include the construction and repair of sea walls to prevent further erosion of the shore, as well as relocating homes and businesses further inland. Strict regulations now govern construction activities that could jeopardize the integrity of the land. These measures, however proactive, only delay the inevitable disappearance of the islands. A rise of one metre, in addition to storm surges can potentially sink other island nations such as the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, or Tuvalu as well. The question remains, how could a nation of one hundred thousand prepare to lose their homes? Thus, the government began to push for people to relocate off the island, though at the moment no nation has agreed to take in Kiribati citizens en masse. Many countries, such as Zambia, have stated that they would be willing to take in the displaced population.

Floods in India, Bangladesh and Nepal:

Most recently in August 2017, more than 40 million people were affected by floods caused by monsoon rain in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. These floods led to the death of more than 1,200 people and prevented some 1.8 million children from going to school. Moreover, the floods caused landslides, destroyed farmland and homes, damaged roads, electric infrastructure and hospitals, and raised the risk of disease outbreak. In India, the floods affected over 18 million people, their livelihoods, education, and infrastructure. India is highly vulnerable to climate change, with 65% of the country being drought prone and 12% being flood prone. Many people who are displaced by climate change impacts decide to move to urban areas, searching for greater security, better access to basic services, and greater economic opportunities. Indeed, research of the International Institute for Environment and Development shows that environmental disasters, such as the flood in India, increase internal migration. Bad economic prospects and high vulnerability to further hazards lead to rising working migration from rural areas into the cities. Internal migration into the city can lead to uncontrolled urbanization and informal settlement, increasing vulnerability of the displaced population due to improper housing, livelihood insecurity, inadequate sanitation, ineffective social protection scheme, and lack of health care and other basic services. Additionally, low education levels, discrimination and exploitation worsen the situation for migrants, especially for women and girls. Besides internal climate change-related migration movements, India also faces environmental immigration from other countries, inter alia from its neighbouring country Bangladesh which is also hazard-prone. However, India often explains migration from Bangladesh as caused by socio-economic and political problems. These cross-border movements have led to tensions in India-Bangladesh relations, as India is worried about illegal migration from Bangladesh and its social and political consequences.

Conclusion

The efforts to address displacement due to climate change and disasters need to consider a variety of complex and interconnected environment- and climate change-related variables. Diverse causes lead to a devastating number of negative impacts such as the destruction of livelihoods, water and food scarcity, or lacking supply of medical care. Yet, also other related factors such as the status of development, decreasing work opportunities and low resilience in the home country due to climate change can drive environment related movements. Consequently, the variety of causes needs be answered by a variety of diverse international, regional, bilateral and national cooperation strategies, especially as displacements may occur internally or across international borders.




However, international cooperation on cross-border movement management and settlement strategies still lacks. Countries of origin, transit, and destination should consider working closely together to develop such strategies. International consensus on the treatment and rights of persons displaced is crucial to eliminate tensions between countries that may occur due to the unclear status of the persons displaced. Giving adequate and comprehensive recommendations on these topics is vital for further progress in the field of addressing displacement of person due to climate change and disasters.

Questions to Consider

- How can the UNHCR address the complex interdependency between climate change, environment and displacement?
- How can the UNHCR within its capacity and mandate tackle the causes of climate change-related displacement?
- How can the UNHCR strengthen disaster risk reduction and the resilience of vulnerable populations?
- What can the GA do to support other concerned agencies in the field of climate and disasters induced displacement?
- How can the UNHCR support Member States that are or will be extensively affected by climate and disasters induced displacement?
- Can the UNHCR effectively support the national creation and implementation of displacement related management strategies?
- What are the existing legal, policy and administrative steps taken by your country?
- How can your country ensure better treatment of displaced populations?
- What protection and response national strategies can your country take?
- What challenges remain in addressing climate and disasters induced displacement?
- How can the UNHCR effectively honour and support international agreements to ensure safe cross-border migration in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters?
- How can UNHCR tackle the lack of legal protections offered to the displaced populations?
- How can the legal gaps that exist in the international framework be effectively addressed?
- How can UNHCR promote that states adopt a plan that is inclusive of communities, migrants and neighbouring countries during relocation efforts?
- How can incentives for taking in more people be increased and their natural rights protected?
- How can UNHCR assist states, governments, stakeholders, citizens and Civil Society Organizations in implementing effective mitigation strategies at the community level?
- How can UNHCR prevent environmental degradation that leads to displacement of population and build sustainable aid programs?
- How can UNHCR protect current populations displaced by climate change and disasters?

Note: These questions aren't meant to be exhaustive in nature and some may overlap with others. Feel free to address some of your own or alter these as per your understanding and research.

Some Links for Further Research:

-  https://www.preventionweb.net/files/20227_1116disastersanddisplacementcohen1.pdf
-  <http://www.unhcr.org/540854f49.pdf>
-  <http://www.unhcr.org/596f25467.pdf>

- ✚ <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/562f798d9/planned-relocation-guidance-october-2015.html>
- ✚ <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/5a12f9577/climate-change-disaster-displacement-global-compacts-unhcrs-perspectives.html>
- ✚ https://www.unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/MICIC_Guidelines_web.pdf
- ✚ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6UxTTrdsZo>
- ✚ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2nTq67So3U>
- ✚ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46yvAKge3qQ>
- ✚ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6QEDbI5zrg>
- ✚ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33GdaaCkkKo>

Note: Again, these aren't meant to be exhaustive in nature. You are required to look up other sources too, especially more scholarly articles, opinion pieces, policy instruments, books, news sources etc. Basically, anything that you can find. Just make sure it's credible and substantive in nature. And you may not religiously follow the above-mentioned pieces. Feel free to not consider a few points or ignore somethings that you might already know or must have researched on.

Most importantly, question everything that you read or listen. And try to find appropriate answers to those questions. Again, the answers might not be right, but make sure they are at least appropriate in their content, form and context. And above everything else, research to gain some valuable insights, to broaden your horizons, to learn a few important things about something important and to enable yourselves to learn something substantive and valuable in life. Do not just concern yourself with the outcome or the end product. I am not saying that do not care at all about that. Please do. But the process is above everything. Engage yourself diligently and with a genuine zeal in the process of this activity. Once you are able to make the process enriching in nature, the outcome will be fruitful as well. All the Best!

Happy Researching!

May the force be with you!

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<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

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UNHCR, Climate change, natural disasters and human displacement: a UNHCR perspective, p. 3

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