

**Submission by the Overseas Development Institute to the Task Force on Displacement established by the Executive Committee (Excom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) – 31 May 2018**

**Summary**

1. Climate change exacerbates the underlying challenges of development, many of which are the same factors that contribute to migration and displacement. Good practices and potential measures to manage migration and displacement will be unsuccessful unless they address currently unsustainable development pathways, build resilience to multiple hazards and support adaptation.
2. Developing countries need more finance, capacity and technological support to implement and integrate policies on climate action, sustainable development, migration and disaster risk reduction into overall socioeconomic planning.
3. Urgent work is needed on how to coordinate and complement implementation, particularly in developing countries, of the international frameworks agreed in 2015 on: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Paris Agreement; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and the forthcoming Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This should include establishing an expert panel to consider and make recommendations on how to better integrate implementation of these international frameworks at national and international levels.

## Introduction

4. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is an independent, global think tank, working for a sustainable and peaceful world in which every person thrives. We harness the power of evidence and ideas through research and partnership to confront challenges, develop solutions, and create change. We undertake cutting-edge research and analysis to generate evidence, ideas and solutions. We act as trusted, expert advisers to those making change around the world. We bring people together to turn ideas into action. We communicate our work around the world to increase its reach and impact.
5. ODI is pleased to make this submission to the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM). This submission contains information on factors that affect both movement and decisions to stay of vulnerable populations, and challenges and opportunities associated with minimising, averting and addressing both internal and cross-border displacement – in the context of climate change impacts. It provides recommendations to the ExCom for addressing challenges.

## Links between displacement and migration, climate change and development

6. Increasing climate variability and change impacts are placing additional stress on the livelihoods of many of the world's poorest, and the resources and systems on which they depend, such as sufficient quality water for daily and economic needs. In some instances, the additional stresses posed by climate change are facilitating migration. Extreme events, on the other hand, are triggering forced displacement; one has to move when one's house is under floodwater. Such displacements have so far tended to be temporary, and most of the displaced stay within country. There may be instances in the future where sea level rise or extreme desertification render some areas uninhabitable, and people might be permanently displaced. Insufficient data on mobility within country and cross border, as well as tracking of drivers, are significant challenges in studies estimating scenarios of future mobility linked with climate change.
7. As a result of a growing number of displacement events and awareness of the impacts of climate change on livelihoods and assets, there is increasing international focus on climate-related migration, displacement and human mobility, both across and within borders. ODI has conducted significant research on the linked issues of migration, climate change, adaptation and development; see for example:
  - Opitz-Stapleton, S., R. Nadin, C. Watson and J. Kellett (2017). *Climate change, migration and displacement. The need for a risk-informed and coherent approach*. ODI and UNDP Report. (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11874.pdf>).

- Nadin, R. and E. Roberts (2018). Moving towards a growing global discourse on transboundary adaptation. ODI Briefing Note. (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12139.pdf>).
  - Wilkinson, E., L. Schipper, C. Simonet and Z. Kublik (2016). *Climate change, migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. ODI Briefing. (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11144.pdf>)
  - Foresti, M. and J. Hagen-Zanker (2017). *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. ODI Publication Series. (<https://www.odi.org/publications/10913-migration-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>).
8. At the same time, people are already moving and will continue to move irrespective of climate change. The growth in urbanization is occurring in large part because of human mobility, with 68% of the world's population projected to live in urban areas by 2050<sup>1</sup>. For both migration and displacement, the majority of those who have moved have tended to stay in country. Those who cross borders often go to neighbouring countries and stay within region (Opitz-Stapleton et al, 2017).
9. The drivers of rural to urban migration are complex, but access to employment and economic opportunities factor heavily into decisions to migrate, and whether people stay within country or cross borders. Understanding decisions to migrate or not requires a better understanding of the development conditions in both sending and receiving communities. Lack of access to services and employment opportunities, agricultural indebtedness, environmental degradation, desire for amenities and services (such as health care and education), and family reunification are some of the many drivers influencing mobility.
10. 'Disasters are manifestations of *unresolved development problems*<sup>2</sup>. A climate-related hazard, be it an extreme weather event or a slow onset hazard like sea level rise, results in a disaster (deaths and severe economic losses) when it interacts with underlying development problems. For example, the effects of a variable climate, such as delayed or deficient rains, are more difficult to manage when they are coupled with poor socioeconomic development. Deficiencies in development make people, assets and infrastructure more vulnerable and exposed to shocks and stressors and less resilient. It is also all of these factors *together* that influence decisions and ability to migrate - temporarily, cyclically or permanently - or give rise to displacement in some cases. Trying to separate the factors and attribute movement solely to climate-related hazards or change ignores the underlying development problems that influence human mobility.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNDESA (2018) *2018 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects*. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UNDESA. (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>)

<sup>2</sup> UNISDR (2015) *Making Development Sustainable: The Future of Disaster Risk Management*. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR): Geneva, Switzerland. Quote: p. 33.

11. The ability to return home and rebuild lives after displacement, or to move elsewhere and try making a new life is contingent upon development, with success of integration dependent on policies and conditions in receiving locations. Migrants can place additional pressure on infrastructure and services at destinations without support, as documented in ODI work (Opitz-Stapleton et al, 2017; Wilkinson et al, 2016) on migration in the context of climate change. On the other hand, migrants can contribute greatly to socioeconomic development in receiving communities when appropriate, supportive and resilient development provisions are in place (ibid).
12. Finally, a focus on human mobility can divert attention from *human immobility*, that is those who do not have the ability – for example, financial resources, family networks or physical capacity – to migrate. Those who wish to move but are unable are often among the most marginalized and vulnerable populations. These populations may also be the ones least able to return home after being displaced, due to the same development challenges that have increased their vulnerability and exposure.

### **Integrating migration within other international frameworks**

13. Development is at the core of human mobility and losses and damages in the face of climate change. How mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions and policies are implemented and achieved influence whether development is sustainable and risk informed, and influence displacement and choice in migration. Such efforts also influence the ability of receiving destinations to sustainably and resiliently integrate migrants and ensure that they have access to social protections and basic services. Yet, it must be acknowledged that efforts related to these areas, along with climate change and its impacts, represent additional burdens for developing countries that come on top of sustainable development efforts.
14. The year 2015 culminated in three global processes: the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There has been significant focus in global discussions on the importance of integrating these three frameworks and ensuring in particular that efforts to achieve the SDGs are integrated with climate action. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will be launched in 2018, and will ideally also integrate elements from the three preceding frameworks. However, there has been little focus on how to support developing countries to implement all these frameworks in a way that maximizes synergies and resources. There has also been little meaningful discussion on how to practically integrate policies and action, and little acknowledgement of the on the ground realities, barriers and challenges, in developing countries.

15. The SDGs, the SFDRR and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement each have very different accountability frameworks, guidelines and indicators to monitor progress. They lack dedicated resources that developing countries can access to support implementation. The reality is that many developing countries, in particular, are struggling to implement all three agendas simultaneously. Along with the lack of resources, there is often a lack of inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination at the national and sub-national level. National actions are often also driven by international donor – rather than country – priorities, and implemented in short-term projects rather than long-term strategies.

### **Recommendations to the WIM**

16. We recommend that the WIM, in its recommendations to the developed and developing countries through the COP Process, should:

- Recognise that migration and displacement, independent of and in the context of climate change, are fundamentally sustainable, resilient development issues.
- Recognise that migration, independent of climate change, is occurring and that both sending and receiving communities need better risk-informed, sustainable development support in order to reduce climate risks, including that of displacement.
- Recognise that the currently siloed and separate implementation processes emerging from the SDGs, the SFDRR and the UNFCCC create additional burdens and challenges for developing countries. This should be addressed through harmonization of the processes, and exploration of integrated financial instruments, capacity building and technology transfer.
- Propose convening a high-level task force or expert panel (high-level group) comprised of champions of the SDGs, the UNFCCC, the SFDRR and the Global Task Force on Migration. This high-level group should:
  - Explore ways of harmonising the guidelines, frameworks and indicators of the SDGs, the SFDRR, NDCs, National Adaptation Plans and forthcoming Migration Compact. This could assist developing countries in integrating implementation of the currently distinct processes into national and subnational socioeconomic planning, and better promote risk-informed, sustainable development.
  - Investigate ways of incorporating migration and displacement into the evaluation criteria of existing funding mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund and Addis Ababa Action Agenda. For example, through the indicators on sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation and mitigation.

- Promote a paradigm shift in the donor and financial investment communities to move from supporting short-term development, disaster risk reduction, or adaptation or mitigation projects, to longer-term strategies (+5 years) that are driven by country needs and priorities, and meet the harmonized criteria.

## Contact

For further information please contact:

Rebecca Nadin, Head of Risk and Resilience, at [r.nadin@odi.org.uk](mailto:r.nadin@odi.org.uk).

David Watson, Head of Public Affairs, at [d.watson@odi.org.uk](mailto:d.watson@odi.org.uk).

Visit the ODI website: <https://www.odi.org/risk-and-resilience>.

## References

- Foresti, M. and J. Hagen-Zanker (2017). *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. ODI Publication Series.  
(<https://www.odi.org/publications/10913-migration-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>).
- Nadin, R. and E. Roberts (2018). Moving towards a growing global discourse on transboundary adaptation. ODI Briefing Note.  
(<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12139.pdf>).
- Opitz-Stapleton, S., R. Nadin, C. Watson and J. Kellett (2017). *Climate change, migration and displacement. The need for a risk-informed and coherent approach*. ODI and UNDP Report.  
(<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11874.pdf>).
- UNDESA (2018) 2018 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UNDESA.  
(<https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>)
- UNISDR (2015) Making Development Sustainable: The Future of Disaster Risk Management. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR): Geneva, Switzerland.
- Wilkinson, E., L. Schipper, C. Simonet and Z. Kublik (2016). *Climate change, migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. ODI Briefing.  
(<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11144.pdf>)

---

### Overseas Development Institute

Registered Office:  
203 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7922 0300

[odi.org](https://odi.org)

---