

**Geneva Peacebuilding Platform Working Group
on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peacebuilding:
Briefing 1 with Roberto Forin, Mixed Migration Centre**

Date: 27 May 2020, 14:00

Location: Zoom

Attendees: 16 representatives of international organizations in Geneva and beyond, including France, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom

Meeting Summary:

Roberto Forin joined the Working Group on 27 May 2020 to make a short presentation and stimulate dialogue among group members on the intersections of climate change and mixed migration. This document briefly outlines the key points of the presentation and of the discussion among members. Roberto's bio and summary follows.

Key Presentation Points:

- Lack of status and poverty of options will force many into mixed migratory irregularity and increase vulnerability
- Statistics
 - 17 million people were displaced in 2018, often rural to urban migration
 - Future estimates range from from 25 million to one billion people, both within-country or across-border, both permanently and temporarily
- Climate change and environmental stressors cannot easily be disaggregated from the wide range of factors affecting population movements, and even where some disaggregation is evident the results are not seen in the volume, direction, or designation choices of those affected
- Involuntary immobility
 - People lacking financial and social capital needed to move away from locations vulnerable to environmental change
 - Having no agency to move will make these people even *more* vulnerable to environmental change
- The MMC is authoring a forthcoming report (Dec 2020) on Migration, Climate, and Cities
 - Humanity is facing the biggest migration in history: Rural to urban
 - The new question of management is how to account for and safely accommodate everyone in cities
 - Interesting links here with covid19

- Useful Links
 - [Link to Powerpoint](#)
 - MMC's Report on [Weak Links: Challenging the Climate and Mixed Migration Paradigm in the Horn of Africa and Yemen](#)
 - MMC's [2019 Mixed Migration Review](#)

Key Discussion Points:

- On best practices
 - There is not much at the global level - many major actors are talking about it, but there is not a lot of action
 - MMC will publish report on this topic at the city-level in December
- On legal status for climate-related migrants
 - New Zealand recently attempted to give legal status and protections to some coming from the Pacific Islands, but it was reverted by the courts
 - Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) raises climate change as a topic, but does not address the legal problems; it offers a good framework for cooperation but actual legal efforts must go beyond
 - Reopening the 1951 Refugee Convention is a dangerous and complex approach
 - A different approach is Europe's example in 2015-2016 when subsidiary protections were given to many to offer an opportunity to build their futures in new countries
 - It will be almost impossible for people to legally argue that they are moving because of climate change, so the whole system will need to be changed
 - There is a distinction between status and protection
 - A recent migrant interviewed in New Zealand explained, He didn't want "protection," but instead just wanted a chance
- Solidarity towards refugees is probably at its lowest point in many years, especially with covid19
- Questions were also raised about the tension between rural-urban migration and gentrification, the climate vulnerability of informal/slum settlements,

Ongoing Questions:

1. What will be the legal status of people displaced by climate change?
2. What choice will status-less people have but resort to travel in mixed and irregular migration flows or remain stranded?
3. Are we ready to respond to the challenges that the effects of climate change is going to pose to some of our global cities, keeping in mind the specific vulnerabilities of newly arrived internal or international migrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers?

Speaker: [Roberto Forin](#) is the Programme Coordinator of the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) in Geneva. Before moving to Geneva, Roberto worked as research coordinator for the Vienna-based International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and before that he worked in Greece as Deputy Head of Mission for the ICRC during the height of the migration crisis in 2015/2016. Robert builds on over ten years of experience in the protection and assistance of refugees and displaced populations, having worked for the ICRC and IOM in Sudan, Colombia, Haiti, Gaza, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He has authored several research publications mostly focused on mixed migration, protection for people on the move and migration policies in the wider Mediterranean.

Mixed Migration Centre: The [MMC](#) is a global network consisting of seven regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration.

Geneva Peacebuilding Platform: [GPP](#) is a knowledge hub that connects the critical mass of peacebuilding actors, resources, and expertise in Geneva and worldwide. Founded in 2008, the Platform has a mandate to facilitate interaction on peacebuilding between different institutions and sectors, and to advance new knowledge and understanding of issues and contexts related to building peace. The Platform ensures the continuous exchange of information through seminars, consultations, and conferences, and facilitates outcome-oriented dialogues on peacebuilding practice.