

**Geneva Dialogue on Environment,
Climate, Conflict, and Peace:
Meeting 8**

17 November, Zoom

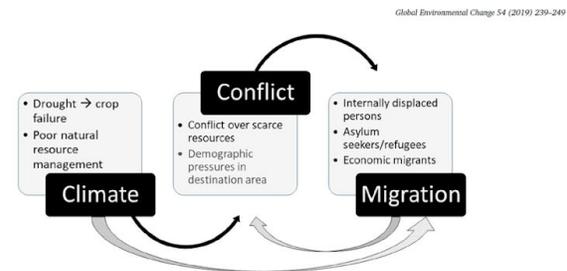
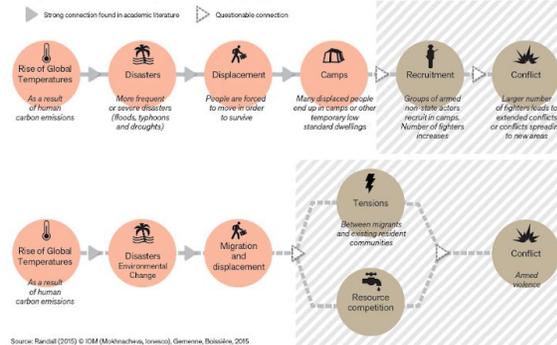
Participants: 22 participants from a range of institutions

Presentation from Alice Baillat, Associate Expert, and Dina Ionesco, Head of Division, both at the Division on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

- MECC Division in IOM
 - For a long time, environmental issues & drivers were not discussed in the migration community - this shifted around 2000
 - Division established in 2015
 - There is an overinterest in this topic now
 - There is now a problem that there is a *lot* of awareness of “environmental refugees” but much of the information going around is not correct
 - MECC has a strong emphasis on
 - Global policy (like the Global Compact for Migration)
 - Advocacy
 - Capacity-building
 - Provision evidence and data
 - The division also manages the IOM’s sustainability policy
 - Now thinking about what happens next and what the key outputs for the next decade can/will be
 - They are also looking for partnerships in the coming months and years
 - Looking for cross-cutting, collaborative approaches, not operating solely in silo’d divisions.
- On a broad level
 - There is increasing relevance of environmental and climatic drivers in migration
 - People on the move in and out of vulnerable situations stemming from a wide range of drivers, including climate change, environmental degradation, disasters, poverty, and instability
 - Sudden-onset (floods, cyclones) and slow-onset events and processes (sea level rise, erosion)
 - Risk and stress multipliers
 - Threatens livelihoods and habitability
 - Increases competition over resources
 - Framing the issue is difficult
 - Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their homes or choose

- to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.
 - The “trapped population” - individuals who may not be able to move due to gender, disability, socioeconomic status
 - Further exposed to disaster, conflict, instability
- A triple approach
 - Avert
 - Solutions for people to stay
 - Measures:
 - Disaster risk reduction
 - Climate change adaptation and mitigation
 - Resilience building
 - Community stabilization
 - Minimize
 - Solutions for people to move
 - Measures:
 - Ensuring migration pathways via: free movement protocols, labor schemes or transhumance agreements
 - As a last resort, planning relocations of people living in high risk areas
 - Address
 - Solutions for people on the move
 - Measures:
 - Contingency planning
 - Humanitarian relief aid
 - Granting, expediting or waiving visas
 - Non-return policies or reintegration strategies
- Policy coherence
 - Migration into key environmental, climate change, development, humanitarian policy
 - Climate change and disaster concerns into migration governance
 - Two significant frameworks:
 - UNFCCC - Paris Agreement and Loss & Damage Agenda
 - Task force addressing displacement at the global level
 - Global Compact for Migration
 - Strongly recognized climate change factors as drivers of migration
 - No legal representation for individuals, but there are ongoing initiatives at the regional and local levels too
- Migration, environment, climate change, and security
 - It needs to be better understood and requires further empirical studies and evidence
 - The nexus is often oversimplified in the media - Migrants often depicted as cause of conflict in the places where they arrive

Examples of theories linking climate change, migration and conflict



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- Conflict is a result of social, political, and economic causes that must be contextualized
 - Migration can exacerbate these
 - In most places, governance and socioeconomic factors play a much larger role
- Lessons from the Sahel
 - Significant changes in regional climate trends detected, impacting livelihoods and food security
 - Role of non-climate factors such as unequal land distribution, land tenure challenges, poor governance, inadequate infrastructure
 - Movement of people and livestock are ancestral livelihood strategies but less and less viable because of changes in the environment
 - Growing urbanization and permanent rural to urban migration
 - Increased tensions and conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farmers
 - Regional adaptation policies recognize the links between climate change, migration and conflict but few address these risks.
- Land and conflict in the East and Horn of Africa
 - Primary source of livelihood of millions of people is pastoral
 - Current climate and environmental challenges affect pastoralists (livestock mortality, changes in transhumance routes, food insecurity)
 - Climate variability also affects farmers (changes in harvesting seasons, crop productivity)
 - Non-climate factors (border closures, demographic pressure, protracted armed conflict, cattle raiding)
 - Increased inter-communal tensions
 - Backdrop of protracted armed conflict
 - Difference from Sahel is that there are several initiatives that attempt to mitigate and navigate the conflict
 - UN Strategic Response Plan to Mitigate Cattle Raiding-Related Conflict in South Sudan 2019-2025
 - IGAD Protocol on Transhumance (2020) and Roadmap
 - Development of a Comprehensive Regional Prevention Strategy for the Horn of Africa under the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa
- Protecting human security in the Pacific

- Climate change intersect with the seven domains of human security
- Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security (PCCMHS) joint UN agency programme (IOM, UNESCAP, ILO, OHCHR, PDD, PIFS), funded by UNTFHS
- Protect and empower communities affected by climate change
- Objective: support a regional human security-based response to climate change and disaster-related migration, displacement and planned relocation by:
 - Strengthening state capacity and coordination to deal with disaster displacement and promote labor mobility that is safe, regular and inclusive
 - Empowering communities through training and skills development to increase access to safe labor migration as an adaptation strategy
 - Contributing to the evidence-base of good practices through case studies and data collection
- Ongoing regional policy dialogue (started in October 2020)
- Initiatives attempting to address the different human security risks
- HDP Nexus
 - Really important to address immediate needs following disaster but also to reduce risk and vulnerability with involvement of development/peacebuilding actors
 - The best way to prevent the occurrence of conflict and tension is to invest in development of living conditions of both host communities

Discussion Notes:

Q: How does 'migration' as part of the 'climate conflict' debates/discourses benefit OR suffer from 'immigration fears' in the Western Societies? (benefit in way of having more funds available that other aspects might not have/OR suffer as things are not so simplistic as it is often framed)

A: Part of the answer is in the question.

- This is one way to demonstrate the "human face" of climate change. One way to push for more ambitious action and for states to take into account the human impacts.
- On the other hand, this push creates counterproductive effects because it reactivates immigration fears from western countries, especially when we talk about highly alarming numbers.
 - Far-right parties using climate change in their platform - we must close the border before climate change causes more migrants to come in.
- If you look on how environmental migration grew on the international agenda, it actually started as a part of the security conversation.
- Media goes for the negative and security discourse automatically - but they do not often highlight migrants as positive actors of climate change action.

Q: One of the difficulties with the data is that a lot of measures only track people newly displaced internally that year (ie. the flows of people during one year, or stocks by the end of the year). What efforts are being made to capture the duration of people's displacement, their return home, or relocation elsewhere, or people caught in long-term displacement?

A:

- There is a lot of internal displacement data thanks to IDMC.
- They work with a displacement matrix, but there are a number of different approaches to capture data. They have a number of different quantitative and qualitative studies and projects that cover these issues.
- There is also a realisation of how much there needs to be a data focus on these subjects and a lot of conversations on how to adapt data-capturing tools.
- On 24 November, IOM and IDMC will organise a kind of marketplace for presentations from colleagues on data, knowledge, and gaps. Link will be provided.
 - <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/event/data-and-research-human-mobility-cont-ext-disasters-climate-change-and-environmental>

Q: What could government agencies in Nordic countries support on the practical project level, either in origin or destination countries?

A: A fan of activities.

- Policy is key because there is a lack of coherence between how the UN works and the GCM connects - how to integrate migration into national adaptation plans, how we can support states to incorporate green adaptation plans, etc.
- The ideas of projects are very diverse and concrete: integration projects using land management or clean energy as a tool, greening camps and IOM management, conflict mitigation activities to prevent conflict between migrant and host communities.
- IOM is very decentralized, and their activities are very local and tailored to individual situations.
- Donor countries supporting countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Q: How far does IOM integrate the loss of biodiversity into the MECC/HDPN?

- They do also work on environmental degradation, but it is true that there is a tendency to focus on climate change and they could work much more on biodiversity in the future.
 - For example, they currently work with IUCN.
 - Looking at the role of natural resources in terms of security, migration, etc.

Q: How does IOM work with the peace and security pillar of the UN (ex PBSO)? And with peacebuilding actors on the ground?

A: https://publications.iom.int/fr/system/files/pdf/operationalizing_hdpn.pdf

Q: To what extent does IOM work to address the negative environmental impacts of the livelihood strategies of migrations (e.g. artisanal mining), especially when those lead to tension/conflict with local communities?

A: IOM is very decentralized and very project oriented, so this depends. This question can be followed up via email.

Additional, helpful links:

- Glossary on migration: <https://www.iom.int/glossary-migration-2019>
- IOM MECC site: <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/>