Regional Insights: Exploring Effective Practices on Addressing Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change

GCM Talk – Arab Region - 5 June 2024

Summary Report

Background

Drawing on the data collated in the [CLIMB Database](#) and building momentum towards the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) Regional Review for the Arab Region, the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM or the "Network") workstream on Climate Change, GCM and Paris Agreement held an online GCM Talk on June 5th, 2024, entitled "*Regional insights: Exploring Effective Practices on Addressing Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change GCM Talk – Arab Region*".

The GCM Talk provided an overview of policy development across the Arab region on addressing human mobility in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. The discussions highlighted the ways in which Member States can use data to identify and address policy gaps and outline opportunities for Member State engagement to advance the implementation of relevant GCM commitments analyzed under the CLIMB Database. It also provided a regional overview of policy and legislative developments around climate mobility issues, while promoting increased knowledge and understanding on the availability of and ways to use the data contained in the CLIMB Database for Member States and other stakeholders.

Organization

The 90-minute GCM Talk for this workstream took place online.
Simultaneous interpretation was available in English, French, and Spanish.
This GCM Talk was organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) on behalf of the UN Network on Migration workstream on Climate Change, the GCM and the Paris Agreement.

Objectives

The GCM Talk aimed to:

- Provide a regional overview of policy and legislative developments around governments' GCM commitments in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation, highlighting good practices;
- Promote increased knowledge and understanding on the availability of and ways to use the data contained in the CLIMB Database for Member States and other stakeholders;
- Encourage Member States and stakeholders to engage with, contribute to, and further strengthen the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the database; and
- Discuss GCM implementation ahead of the GCM regional reviews for the Arab region.

The discussion was based on the following guiding questions:

- How have recent policy and legal developments in the region addressed human mobility in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation?
- What good practices have emerged in implementing relevant GCM commitments in the Arab region? Which challenges were identified in implementing relevant GCM commitments?
- How can regional cooperation and collaboration be enhanced to better facilitate pathways for regular migration in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation?
- How can the data and insights from the CLIMB Database be used effectively to inform future GCM implementation in the region? What could be concrete next steps?

Participants

A total of 121 participants were registered for this GCM Talk.

The following speakers participated to the event:
- Mr. Othman Belbeisi, MENA Regional Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Mr. Timo Schmidt, Associate Policy Officer, The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)
- Ms. Masako Ueda, Migration, Environment, Climate Change and Risk Reduction Thematic Specialist for the Middle East and North Africa, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Mr. Yousif Muayad Yousif, Director of the Directorate of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Government of Iraq
- Mr. Amine Chabi, the Head of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division in the Directorate of Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Morocco
- Ms. Yasmine El Touny, Counselour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Egypt
- Ms. Amy Muedin, Deputy Head, United Nations Network on Migration Secretariat

Identification of key challenges

While there are a number of increasing initiatives that States and other actors are undertaking to strengthen or replicate existing practices, challenges remain. Some of those identified and discussed in the GCM talk relate to:

The notable impacts of climate change on human mobility in the region:
- The Arab region is warming nearly twice as fast as the global average, facing extreme water scarcity, high temperatures, and limited arable land, while highlighting that by 2050, without action, 19.3 million people in North Africa could be moving internally in climate change and disaster contexts according to 2021 Groundswell report of the World Bank.
- Climatic and environmental changes pose unprecedented challenges to meeting commitments under the GCM and the 2030 Agenda.

Key challenges related to policy development in the Arab region:
- Human mobility in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation tend to be addressed more extensively in policy documents than legal frameworks in the Arab region. For example, the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2030 incorporates risk reduction considerations into national and local policies and addresses the vulnerability of displaced persons, but legal instruments specifically referring to displacement issues related to the adverse effects of climate change remain limited.

- In terms of different types of human mobility, there is a primary focus on addressing internal displacement within existing policies across the region.
- The facilitation of regular pathways for persons moving in disaster and climate change contexts remains limited in existing policies, especially with regard to cross-border movement. A few exceptions to this exist, as illustrated in the example of a resolution by the UAE Cabinet, which granted nationals of countries facing disasters a one-year stay permit in 2018.

Data collecting is facing logistical and methodological challenges:
- Accurate data is essential for understanding and addressing the impacts of displacement, yet gathering such data poses logistical and methodological challenges. In general, data on displacements impacted by the adverse effects of climate change rely heavily on field collection by staff, which is a time-consuming undertaking. At the same time, in practice, different staff members may have different interpretations of identification criteria for special cases, affecting data accuracy.
- Relevant examples of good practices shared during the GCM talk include Egypt and Iraq. Egypt's ongoing efforts to conduct its second round of the Household International Migration Survey, which involves collecting data from approximately 100,000 households nationwide, highlight the complexities and difficulties inherent in data collection, particularly given the country's large population.
- Despite the challenges in quantifying the number of families displaced in the context of the adverse effects of climate change, the Iraqi government is actively working on developing a unified methodology for field staffs to identify the specific number of displaced families accurately.

Lack of partnerships between governments:
- Partnerships and alliances are crucial to address climate change issues. However, partnerships in the MENA region specifically addressing the intersection of climate change and human mobility remain scarce. Ms. Yasmine El Touny, Counselor of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Egypt, concluded her intervention by stressing the importance of strengthened dialogue to agree on cooperation prospects at regional and global levels, allowing countries to contribute to sustainable development and access necessary climate financing to address human mobility challenges.
- The Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (M-MPTF) is regarded as a vivid example of supporting Member States partnerships on the implementation of the GCM, such as an ongoing multi-country programme in cooperation with the Governments of Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan aimed at building synergy between climate adaptation, health, migration, and disaster risk reduction. This effort involves joint collaboration between IOM, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), serving as an entry point for UN-system wide support to tackle climate change and human mobility issues in the region.

Recommendations and key take-aways from the GCM Talk
During the GCM Talk, panelists and participants highlighted the following areas in which intervention and increased efforts would be beneficial:

Improving data application capabilities:
- Realize the critical role of data in compiling policies, legal instruments, and practices to inform future actions in policymaking and research, particularly as it relates to GCM Objectives 2 (addressing adverse drivers) and 5 (facilitating regular pathways). Member States and partners

should engage and contribute more actively to the CLIMB database to support GCM implementation. More efforts should be dedicated to regional cooperation related to data collection and information sharing, as well as the development of skills mobility partnerships.

- o *Good practice*: Egypt has been improving its data collection and analysis on migration and climate change through the Central Authority for Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). By conducting regular and special surveys, CAPMAS provides crucial information to decision-makers about rural-to-urban migration and the socioeconomic conditions of affected areas. This comprehensive data collection supports the Egyptian government in creating informed, data-driven policies, and provides one example of better aligning data collection methodologies.

- o *Good practice*: In response to the pressing challenges posed by disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, the Iraqi government has undertaken the development of a comprehensive local database to track climate change statistics and displacement information. Similarly, Morocco places significant emphasis on data collection and analysis to enhance national resilience. They have established an early warning and monitoring system through the National Center for Climate Risk Forecasting and Management. This system focuses on prevention, preparation, response, and post-disaster reconstruction. By collecting and analyzing data, Morocco can adjust its policies to better prepare for and respond to climate-related risks, thereby strengthening its overall resilience. These examples serve as good practice for incorporating climate considerations in data collection.

Enhancing National and International Collaboration:
- An emphasis was put on recognizing the cross-cutting nature of human mobility in climate change contexts and the need of working across different line ministries.

  - o *Good practice*: Key ministries in Iraq, including those responsible for Migration and Displacement, Environment, Civil Defense, and Interior, are working together to address displacement and develop comprehensive national strategies. This internal collaboration ensures more consistent policy-making and a unified approach to tackling these complex issues. The cooperation among these ministries enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of their efforts, leading to better outcomes for displaced populations.

- Strengthening work with technical experts at UN level and civil society was further highlighted as key.
  - o *Good practice*: During the GCM Talk, Morocco also mentioned its extensive collaboration with international organizations like IOM. In 2023, Morocco and the IOM launched a pilot project connecting migration, environment, and climate change in two regions: Tetouan and Souss-Massa. This initiative supports decision-makers in addressing climate change-induced migration by integrating migration policy into broader policy planning.

  - o *Good practice*: Additionally, Morocco promotes climate solidarity with other African countries through initiatives like the AAA initiative for agricultural adaptation and the 3S initiative for sustainability, stability, and security. These efforts provide innovative solutions to displacement and seek to enable enhanced access to sustainable energy.

Mainstreaming sustainable development principles:

- An emphasis was put on integrating sustainable development principles into all public policies.

  - *Good practice*: Morocco's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) integrates sustainable development principles into all public policies. To mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, Morocco has implemented a mix of policies focusing on adaptation and resilience. The country ranks in the top 10 globally on the Climate Change Performance Index, thanks to sustainable and inclusive development policies, national industry initiatives, and renewable energy development.

Facilitating regular pathways:

- Working with technical partners to develop strategies for enhancing regular pathways was highlighted as important to meet future human mobility challenges in climate change and disaster contexts. In the context of North Africa, there is a significant and growing potential to use migration as an adaptation strategy by building on existing skills, mobility partnerships, and bilateral labour agreements (BLAs), particularly in green job sectors. By leveraging the successes and ensuring that these programmes respect the human rights of migrants, including their labour rights, we can create more structured and secure migration channels, promoting orderly and safe migration while also contributing to the sustainable development of both countries of origin and destination.

This summary of the GCM Talk held on 5 June 2024 was prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) on behalf of the UN Network on Migration workstream on Climate Change, the GCM, and the Paris Agreement. This report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Network members, and it is a summary, not a verbatim transcript. The full recording is available here.