

Linking Policy, Evidence and Practice from GCM to Paris Agreement: Human Mobility in the Changing Climate

Date and time: 18 May, 2022, 18.30-20.00

Notetakers: Paul Tacon

Summary (500 words max)

- The side event addressed climate change as a driver of migration, the potential of migration to serve as a means of adaptation, and initiatives undertaken to ensure the protection of climate-affected migrants through national, bilateral and regional approaches. It primarily addressed objectives 2, 5, 6 and 23.
- The side event took place in-person, in UN Conference Room 8. 49 participants registered for the event, while additional participants watched online.¹
- The event was moderated by Ms. Michelle Leighton, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO. Ms Leighton introduced the topic of the side event, highlighting the need identified by the co-leads of the UN Network Thematic Workstream on climate change and migration² for greater synergy between the processes underway under the UNFCCC, especially the Task Force on Displacement, and the GCM. She further discussed the importance of decent work for migrant workers as a key element of adaptation planning, enabling migrants to develop skills and resources to facilitate resilience-building.
- Ms. Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director, IOM, highlighted the potential of the GCM process to bring together and operationalise commitments under different platforms and processes on climate change and migration
- Professor François Gemenne, Director Hugo Observatory, emphasised that climate change-related migration was already underway, driven by people's perceptions of change. He stressed the importance of ensuring that narratives around climate change-related migration did not feed xenophobic attitudes and policies.
- Atty Analiza Rebueta-Teh, Undersecretary, Climate Change Service and Mining Concerns, the Philippines, discussed actions undertaken to assess climate change displacement risks, and build the resilience of vulnerable populations. She emphasized the importance of collaboration between different actors.
- Lieutenant-Colonel Neumi Vakadewabuka, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Fiji to the United Nations, explained that Fiji was addressing adaptation through a Climate Change Act as a framework for a whole-of-government response. He stressed the need for mitigation; strengthen efforts to assist people to stay when possible, and move when necessary; and address protection.
- Ms. Eileen Wedel, Deputy Director, Office of Population and International Migration, US Government, discussed the US Government's understanding that

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² ILO, IOM, and UNFCCC



climate change spurred displacement by exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The US Government was developing a roadmap for response, based on strengthening adaptation and resilience, and developing pathways for legal migration and in the context of refugee programmes.

- Professor Walter Kaelin, Envoy of the Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, highlighted existing good practices, primarily focused on solutions for people compelled to move in the context of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. He stressed that regional guidelines and protocols and greater policy coherence would help in developing pathways for people moving in such contexts.
- Ms. Ruven Menikdiwela, Director, UNHCR New York Office, acknowledged that climate was a driver of displacement. She discussed action to strengthen preparedness and build capacities including through environmentally-friendly programmes, enhancing resilience through knowledge exchange between host and refugee communities, and supporting planned relocations as required. She stressed the importance of data.
- Mr. Lucas Tavares, Senior Officer, FAO New York, emphasised the scale of the challenge for rural populations, and outlined responses to build resilience, restore ecosystems, and strengthen capacities of local governments to adapt, and to enable migration to contribute to rural development.
- Interventions from the floor addressed the need to ensure that conversations about climate change and migration did not contribute to xenophobia. A coherent approach was suggested to use the Paris Agreement to minimize drivers, the Sendai Framework to reduce vulnerabilities, and the GCM to enable people to move when needed.
- H.E. Ms. Caroline Dumas, Special Envoy for Climate Change and Migration, IOM, summed up by stressing the importance to focus on both drivers and pathways, and to integrate climate change-related mobility as part of overall migration in the contemporary world, reconciling climate and migration policies and focusing on adaptation and resilience practices. Key issues included ensuring the sustainability of climate financing, considering relocation when adaptation was no longer sufficient, ensuring coherent development of climate and migration policies, and strengthening international and regional collaboration. More regular pathways for labour mobility and protection of rights were an important part of the solution. There was a consensus on the need to collaborate to hone advocacy messages in preparation for UNFCCC COP27 and to maximise synergies and ensure implementation of guidance produced under the UNFCCC Taskforce on Displacement, PDD and GCM processes.



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