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FORUM: General assembly

ISSUE: Preventing mass displacement due to climate change

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POSITION: President and Deputy-president of General Assembly

Introduction:

Climate change continues to be one of the most disparaging issues plaguing the global community as a whole. Understanding the connection between climate change and migration will be crucial to attempting to solve both these problems. Although there has always been a core interdependency between human migration and climate, the phenomenon of global warming, and the extreme weather, rising sea levels and instability that it brings, has added new layers to this relationship.

UNICEF estimates that 500 million children live in flood-prone areas, 160 million children are exposed to severe drought, and 115 million children are exposed to tropical cyclones. The WHO estimates that every year, environmental risks take the lives of 1.7 million children under five years, representing the biggest global threat to children's lives at the moment. At the same time, there are 50 million children in migration worldwide. One in every 200 children is a refugee. 20 million people were facing the threat of famine in Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen early this year due to severe droughts and massive food shortages, combined with conflict and extreme poverty.

Mass migration and climate change are interdependent problems. A planet that is unstable leads to an unstable society wherein violence and insecurity reign supreme. As some areas are more affected than others, due to economic or population disparity, this leads to mass movements of people seeking better and more stable alternatives as humans are want to. Therefore, understanding the climate-migration nexus can become a tool to solving both the climate crisis and the migration crisis. If we continue to treat them separately we are failing to see the bigger picture.

Key Terms:

Climate migration

The movement of a person or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change, are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border.

Capacity building

Building capacity of governments and civil society by increasing their knowledge and enhancing their skills. Capacity building can take the form of substantive direct project design and implementation with a partner government, training opportunities, or in other circumstances facilitation of a bilateral or multilateral agenda for dialogue development put in place by concerned authorities. In all cases, capacity building aims to build towards generally acceptable benchmarks of management practices.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

Migration management

A term used to encompass numerous governmental functions within a national system for the orderly and humane management for cross-border migration, particularly managing the entry and presence of foreigners within the borders of the State and the protection of refugees and others in need of protection. It refers to a planned approach to the development of policy, legislative and administrative responses to key migration issues.

Technical cooperation

Coordinated action in which two or several actors share information and expertise on a given subject usually focused on public sector functions (e.g. development of legislation and procedures, assistance with the design and implementation of infrastructure, or technological enhancement)

Anthropogenic

describes a process or result generated by human beings.

ICCCAD

International center for Climate change and development

Problems Raised:

The “sinking” of small islands states

This slow-onset disaster will incite people to migrate to other islands of the same country or abroad, in search of better opportunities. Such movements can turn into forced displacement because areas of origin could become uninhabitable and in extreme cases the remaining territory of affected states could no longer accommodate the whole population or would disappear entirely, rendering repatriation impossible.

The designation of high risk zones too dangerous for human habitation

Affected persons are internally displaced persons. In terms of durable solutions they cannot return but must be relocated to safe areas or locally integrated in the evacuation area

Situations of environmental degradation

Deterioration of conditions of life and economic opportunities as a consequence of climate change may motivate persons looking for better opportunities and living conditions to move to other parts of the country or abroad before the areas they live in become uninhabitable.

Related Countries:

Vietnam

Vietnam is a low-lying coastal country that is highly vulnerable to climate change - in particular sea level rise. USAID is addressing climate change challenges in Vietnam through an integrated mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction approach. Clean Energy activities promote energy efficiency, green building standards and technologies, and access to finance.

Philippines

Philippines is an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia. The Philippines is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures and extreme rainfall. This is due to its high exposure to natural hazards dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources and vast coastlines where all major cities and the majority of the population reside.

Italy

Italy, officially the Italian Republic, is a European country located in south-central Europe. Venice, Italy is sinking at the rate of 1 millimeter per year. Not only is it sinking, but it is also tilting to the east and battling against flooding and rising sea levels. Venice was originally founded as a series of 118 islands separated by canals with 400 bridges that link them.

Related Organizations:

International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)

ICCCAD is an organization works climate change and develop in Bangladesh. ICCCAD's aim is to focuses closely related to local experience, knowledge and research in one of the countries that is most affected by climate change.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) –

USAID is the international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results serve the world for Environmental crisis.

Green Peace –

Greenpeace is a non-governmental environmental organization with offices in over 55 countries and protects our planet to fight for environmental justice.

Previous attempts:

Expanding the definition of a “refugee”

In August 2006 a meeting of NGOs and some affected countries was held in the Maldives to discuss how an expanded definition might be worked into international law. Inclusion within current refugee law would bring the existing weight of international law and precedent to act on the issue – and would trigger certain obligations on the part of other countries being forced to act refugees

The Environmental Change and Forced Migration Project (EACH-FOR)

Funded by the European Commission, EACH FOR is an attempt to address the statistical gap in our understanding of climate migration.

Swedish immigration policy

mentions environmental migrants as a special category as a “person in need of protection” who is unable to return to his native country because of an environmental disaster. However, the extent to which this includes climate change impacts has not yet been clarified. In the parliamentary text explaining the category a nuclear disaster is given as an example of an “environmental disaster” whereas natural disasters are not specifically mentioned.

The Regional Conference on Migration,

which is also known as the “Puebla Process”, played an important role in influencing the US “flexibility” on Temporary protection. Initiated in 1996 the Puebla process is an ongoing regional forum for migration in North and Central America and the Dominican Republic which fosters regular and constructive dialogue on migration issues between the member states.

Possible solutions:

'Climate-friendly towns'

The ICCD is working making this process easier for migrants by working to create "climate-resilient, migrant-friendly" towns. It has identified a dozen inland towns which are far away from low-lying coastal areas and have populations of about 500,000 that can be increased to about 1,500,000 and transformed into climate-resilient towns.

Expanded protection mechanisms.

For example, New Zealand offered special humanitarian visas to climate-affected Pacific Islanders in 2017. This plan was abandoned to focus on Pacific Islanders' stated priorities instead, which are to invest in emissions mitigation and “migration with dignity,” whereby their citizens will be taught new skills to be able to work in other countries on their own terms.

U.S. Senator Ed Markey introduced a bill to recognize “climate-displaced persons” that would welcome up to 50,000 people in an individual fiscal year to resettle in the United States.

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

The GCM is the first global agreement of its kind on migration which explicitly refers to the need to address protection gaps for people displaced by the effects of climate change.