

Project Overview

South Asia, comprising 8 countries including Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal, is affected by a range of natural disasters including floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), storm surges, droughts, cyclones and heavy precipitation. These disasters take a huge toll as they displace thousands of people every year. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted that slow onset disasters and sudden onset disasters will increase in severity and frequency, threatening lives and livelihoods across the region.

In order to assess the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia, through the support of the IOM Development Fund, IOM is undertaking a related study, field research and national consultations in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal to share the findings of the research and raise awareness on the subject.

Through this project, IOM aims to contribute to national and regional policies which address the expected impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement. The project activities thus include:

1. Assessing existing evidence of the linkages between climate change, environmental degradation and migration through a policy and literature review at the regional and national level in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal. Field research will be carried out on the nexus in selected districts of each of the three countries .
2. Drafting a regional strategy framework and model national action plans (NAP's) based on a consultative process and linked to existing action plans/policies.
3. Organizing a regional dissemination meeting for policymakers to present the project outputs.

IOM'S Approach

IOM's central objectives in managing environmental migration are:

- To prevent forced migration resulting from environmental factors to the extent possible;
- To provide assistance and protection to affected populations where forced migration does occur, and to seek durable solutions to their situation;
- To facilitate migration as a climate change adaptation strategy.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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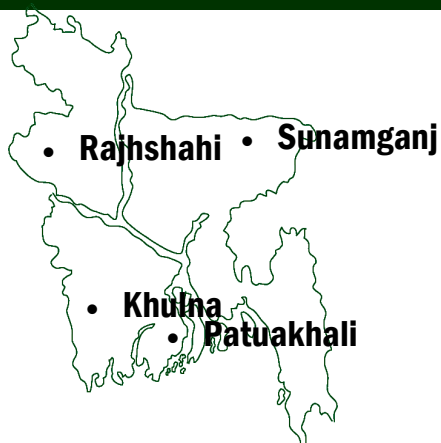
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Assessing the Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia



Assessing the Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia

Bangladesh



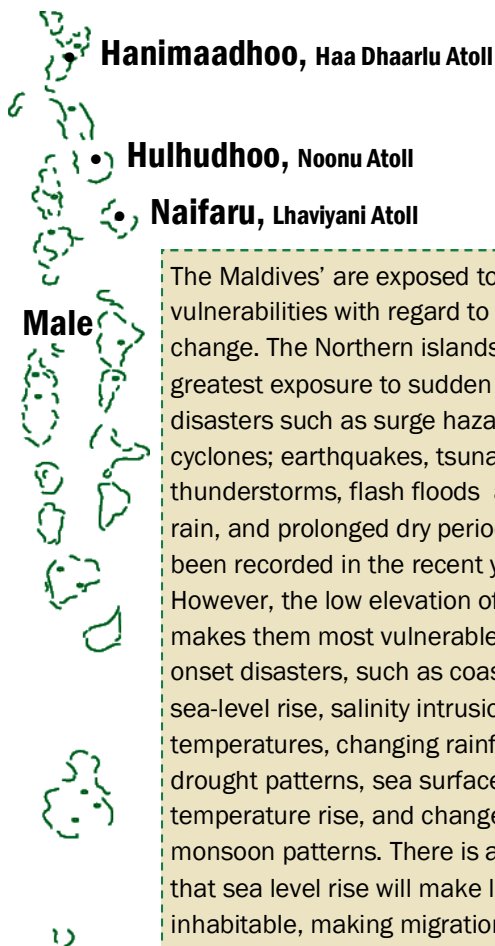
Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation is manifested all over the country. Southern Bangladesh is subject to cyclones and storm surge, salinity intrusion, coastal erosion, riverbank erosion, water logging, and potential sea level rise; the northern part is vulnerable mainly to droughts, riverine floods and flash floods.

While these environmental events make traditional occupations in agriculture difficult, we observe a simultaneous trend in increasing labour migration, which is in fact considered a driving factor for Bangladesh's transition to a middle-income economy.

To assess the evidence of these linkages, the project will undertake a field study in four distinct districts of Bangladesh, vulnerable to specific environmental events and representing high rates of out-migration.



Maldives

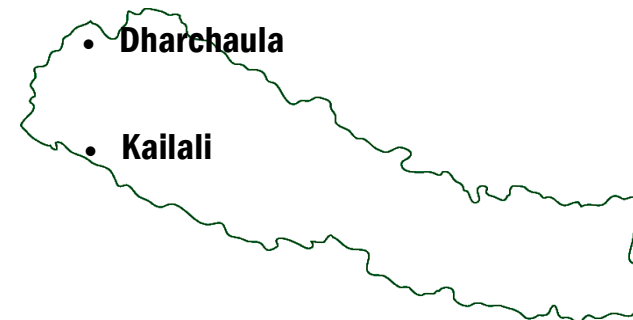


The Maldives' are exposed to different vulnerabilities with regard to climate change. The Northern islands have the greatest exposure to sudden onset disasters such as surge hazards and cyclones; earthquakes, tsunamis, thunderstorms, flash floods and heavy rain, and prolonged dry periods have also been recorded in the recent years.

However, the low elevation of the islands makes them most vulnerable to slow onset disasters, such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, rising temperatures, changing rainfall and drought patterns, sea surface temperature rise, and change in monsoon patterns. There is a concern that sea level rise will make land inhabitable, making migration necessary.

In order to determine the nexus between climate change, environmental degradation and migration, the project will undertake field research in four vulnerable atolls in the Maldives in coordination with key partners.

Nepal



Nepal is a geographically diverse country with three key ecosystems – mountains, hills and the Terai/plain. It is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change because of rapidly melting glaciers—resulting in the danger of glacial lake outbursts and degradation of agricultural land on which two thirds of the population base their livelihoods. At the same time, Nepal is one of the major labour-sending countries in the region, and in return also receives a staggering amount of remittances.



Through this project, IOM will conduct field research in the hilly district of Dharchaula

and in Kailali, in the Terai region. Both regions are prone to climatic vulnerabilities and have a high rate of out migration.