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**IOM'S ROLE AND ACTIVITIES RELATING TO MIGRATION,
THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the regular exchange of information between IOM Member States and the Administration on the complex issue of migration, environment and climate change (MECC), in order to support the Administration's efforts to define common objectives and develop relevant activities.
2. The paper informs Member States about the overall MECC institutional framework, including a broad spectrum of activities across the Organization, and focuses on contributions, forthcoming or already made, to relevant policy processes.
3. IOM's membership last discussed this topic during a workshop entitled Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration, held in the context of the 2011 International Dialogue on Migration (IDM). IOM's activities in this field were discussed at the Ninety-fourth Session of the Council in 2007 and by the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance at its Third Session in 2008 and its Ninth Session in 2011. More specifically, the latter session addressed IOM's role in the humanitarian response to displacement induced by natural disasters.
4. The migration, environment and climate change nexus has gained prominence as a thematic policy issue on national, regional and global agendas. There is wide recognition that human mobility, in both its forced and voluntary forms, is increasingly affected by environmental and climatic factors, while migration in turn affects the environment. The 2014 Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the important and complex nature of human mobility in the climate change context.
5. Over the past few years, IOM has established a comprehensive programme of work on MECC that spans policy, research, development of data-collection tools, data collection, capacity-building, advocacy, fostering partnerships, international migration law, communication, knowledge management, fundraising and operational activities.
6. Activities are cross-cutting throughout the Organization. The Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships hosts the MECC focal point. IOM addresses the links between climate change, the environment and migration, from a human mobility perspective, in order to foster sustainable development and promote managed migration with respect for human rights.
7. IOM has been active in MECC since the early 1990s. The importance of taking environmental and climatic elements into account in IOM's migration management activities is increasingly acknowledged, including in all IOM regional strategies, a 2013 worldwide missions' survey on the topic, the 2014 edition of *Migration Initiatives*, as well as other recent IOM publications dedicated to these issues, and throughout operational projects. Furthermore, IOM aims to mainstream MECC issues in migration profiles and extended migration profiles and has produced guidelines on how to do so. MECC issues are also analysed in the 2010 IOM publication, *Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Practitioners*.

8. The Organization pursues the following three broad objectives with regard to managing environmental migration:

- (a) To prevent, as far as possible, forced migration as a result of environmental factors;
- (b) To provide, when forced migration does occur, assistance and protection for those affected and seek sustainable solutions;
- (c) To harness the potential of migration as a tool for resilience-building and adaptation.

9. A range of activities throughout the migration cycle aim to meet the three objectives, focusing on human mobility as a cause of vulnerability or as a mechanism for building resilience, and taking account of how different types of slow-onset and rapid-onset events have different links to human mobility.

MECC in international policy processes

10. IOM contributes to policy processes, bringing human mobility concerns into relevant environmental and climate change policy areas. The Organization strives to highlight the importance of environmental and climatic factors in regional and global discussions on migration, in line with the key messages from the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

11. Addressing environmentally induced migration requires a comprehensive and strategic approach across a variety of policy areas, including climate change mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk reduction, health, land governance and tenure, sustainable land management, urban planning, education, social policy, asylum development, diaspora mobilization, private-sector engagement and humanitarian and civil protection policies.

12. IOM collaborates with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to increase the visibility of human mobility on the climate change agenda. IOM provides input through various channels, including senior-level engagement, technical submissions to UNFCCC, organization of side events and exhibits during conferences and meetings, and inter-agency technical coordination.¹ Migration is anchored in negotiated texts on climate change, including the Cancun Agreement (2010) and the Doha Decision (2012). IOM has identified the following three priority areas for its contributions to the forthcoming Conferences of the Parties (COP20 in Lima, Peru, 2014 and COP21 in Paris, France, 2015): mobility in relation to adaptation strategies, in particular through the establishment of technical guidelines on integrating migration into national adaptation plans; human mobility in the context of loss and damage; and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

13. An innovative partnership is being developed with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in order to address the complex links between migration, desertification, land degradation and drought, especially in Western Africa and South America. Activities include efforts to promote policy coherence between migration and

¹ Including with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, and the Norwegian Refugee Council and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

sustainable land management policies, and to facilitate migrant and diaspora contributions to adaptation projects.

14. IOM works closely with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other partners in the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) for disaster risk reduction and resilience activities and within the inter-agency Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction, in line with the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, which was adopted in 2013 by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. IOM's contributions are geared towards developing evidence and indicators on how properly managed human mobility can serve as a risk reduction strategy, while unmanaged migration can increase hazard exposure and create new risks. IOM has contributed to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and is making technical, research and policy contributions to the process for establishing, in 2015, the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

15. Measures are being taken to strengthen IOM's partnership with the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), supported by the 2011 Dhaka Declaration. Cooperation between IOM and CVF aims to meet the commitments made in the CVF 2013–2015 Action Plan, which identifies migration and displacement as one of six priority multilateral sectors for advancing legal and policy frameworks and tools to more effectively and equitably address climate change.

16. IOM's cooperation with the European Commission is being strengthened through technical input to recommendations on enhancing implementation of the Commission staff working document on Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration, the European Union Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (2013), the European Commission communication on Maximizing the Development Impact of Migration (May 2013) and the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013–2020. Cooperation efforts on this topic are in line with the EU–IOM Strategic Cooperation Framework.

17. IOM participates actively in the Nansen Initiative to enhance understanding and policy dialogue on cross-border displacement due to natural disasters. Drawing on its experience and expertise, IOM provides substantial contributions to the work of the Nansen Initiative Steering Group and Consultative Committee, as well as to regional consultations, civil society consultations, and research and communication activities within the priorities framed in the 2014–2015 Nansen Initiative programme of work, in close collaboration with the Nansen Initiative secretariat.

18. IOM will contribute to the Climate Summit 2014 through the HLCP Working Group on Climate Change and will provide input to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, focusing on policy responses that address forced and voluntary forms of migration alike and show how resilience can be built by strengthening the role of the diasporas.

19. IOM is strengthening cooperation with key actors in human mobility processes and forums through common initiatives at the level of the Global Migration Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and by contributing to events such as the Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics (2013) and the Asia–Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2013), which coincide with institutional efforts to bring human mobility onto the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

20. Efforts are being made to establish and consolidate new partnerships between the migration and climate communities, notably with the IPCC, the World Meteorological Organization and the Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum, as well as to promote cooperation with various research institutes, think tanks, private and non-governmental organizations and participate in Regional Consultative Processes on Migration.

21. IOM is strengthening its engagement with its membership on the issue of human mobility, environment and climate change, through activities conducted at national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

Examples of activities

22. The 2011 IDM identified areas in which governments and institutions might need to strengthen their capacities in order to manage the complex impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility. Those areas were: building knowledge and improving data collection; strengthening policy, institutional, administrative and legal frameworks; and building operational and technical capacities.

23. In line with these recommendations, activities are being conducted to broaden the evidence base and share knowledge on MECC:

- (a) IOM and a consortium of partners are implementing the Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP) project, funded by the European Commission, which includes research, policy and training activities in six countries, comprising mapping and setting up a knowledge platform. The project will run for the period 2014–2016.
- (b) IOM has published a collection of over 30 titles dedicated to migration, environment and climate change issues. IOM, the University of Versailles and other partners are in the process of compiling the first Atlas of Environmental Migration.
- (c) IOM is building evidence on multi-pronged legal approaches, based on existing bodies of law (humanitarian, consular, environmental, disaster risk reduction) and human rights based strategies, and provides technical support to governments reviewing their legislation. The most recent edition of the IOM and Migration Policy Institute (MPI) publication *Issue in Brief* reviews human rights, climate change and environmental degradation issues in the Asia–Pacific region.²
- (d) Efforts are being made to identify key emerging trends and develop innovative responses, in areas including migration and loss and damage; mainstreaming migration into adaptation strategies; remittances, diaspora mobilization and land rehabilitation; food security, migration and environment; gender, migration and environment; human rights-based approaches to environmental migration; health, migration and environment; migration and urbanization; and engagement of civil society and public–private partnerships on migration and environment.

² IOM–MPI *Issue in Brief* No.8 – *Human Rights, Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration: a New Paradigm*, 2014.

- (e) IOM and the Asian Development Bank have created the Asia Pacific Migration and Environment Network, which will be expanded into a global platform through the MECLEP project.
- (f) In order to build internal capacities, the IOM Administration is developing institutional material and a knowledge management community of practice on MECC.

24. IOM works to develop capacity-building material and organized the first MECC capacity-building workshops, which brought together policymakers and practitioners across policy areas, at regional and national levels, examples of which are outlined below:

- (a) In the Asia-Pacific region a workshop entitled Regional Training on Migration, Environment and Climate Change was held in 2013 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, at the IOM Migration Research and Training Centre in partnership with the Government of the United Kingdom (Foresight), the Asian Development Bank and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.
- (b) In the East Africa region a workshop on Enhancing Capacity of Policymakers and Practitioners on Migration, the Environment and Climate Change was held in 2014 in Moshi, United Republic of Tanzania, at the African Capacity Building Centre, with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom (Foresight).
- (c) Training was held at national level in 2013 in Bogota, Colombia, with a workshop entitled Building a Conceptual Framework for Migration and Climate Change, organized at the request of and in partnership with the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, following the signature of a memorandum of understanding.

25. Between 2010 and 2013, 257 projects were developed and implemented, contributing to disaster response and risk reduction and resilience-building, and directly benefiting at least 23 million individuals.³

26. There are operational activities with a migration and environment dimension in all areas of IOM's work, most importantly in its humanitarian responses to natural disasters, through camp coordination and camp management activities and with the development of tools such as the Displacement Tracking Matrix. The environment dimension is also taken into account in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management activities, including civilian protection, evacuation and planned relocation activities. IOM has trained civilian protection authorities in several countries and developed a reference guide for mass evacuations.⁴ The Migration Crisis Operational Framework features responses to natural sudden-onset and slow-onset events.⁵ Environmental and climatic factors are increasingly taken into account in activities related to border management, health, labour and development.

³ *Compendium on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience*, IOM, 2013.

⁴ *Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters*, Pilot Document, 2014, drafted by a Steering Committee of representatives from government authorities and experts from IOM, United Nations agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Displacement Monitoring Centre and academia.

⁵ The IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework is contained in document MC/2355 of 15 November 2012.

27. The IOM Development Fund finances a number of pilot projects with MECC components, focusing on capacity-building. Countries that have benefited or benefit from such projects include Cambodia, Egypt, Mali, Mauritius, Tajikistan, Peru, Senegal and Kenya.⁶

28. A new generation of activities is emerging, with a focus on adapting to climate change. These activities aim to help governments create the necessary conditions to mobilize migrants and diaspora for adaptation. One such example is the project entitled West Africa: Promoting Sustainable Land Management in Migration-Prone Areas through Innovative Financing Mechanisms (2014–2016), which is being run jointly by the Global Mechanism of UNCCD and IOM, and is funded by the Government of Italy.

Ways forward

29. Based on its mandate and experience and in line with priorities set by Member States and in partnership with relevant organizations, IOM is committed to addressing the MECC nexus through policy dialogue, capacity-building and operational activities. The Organization will thus seek to:

- (a) Bring MECC concerns into relevant key regional, international and inter-agency policy processes by: (i) supporting the mainstreaming of migration matters into key relevant environment and climate change processes; and (ii) supporting the integration of environment and climate change considerations into relevant migration processes;
- (b) Strengthen Member States' support and ownership of IOM's MECC activities and respond to their requests regarding migration management in the context of environmental and climate change, as part of a comprehensive migration management framework;
- (c) Engage in proactive partnership development and consolidation to enhance cooperation and understanding with regard to MECC at all levels (among government, civil society, private sector and academia locally, nationally, regionally and globally);
- (d) Develop regional and national capacities for practitioners and policymakers to manage, in practice, the complex links between migration, environment and climate change;
- (e) Contribute to developing the knowledge base through research, data collection and international migration law research and analysis;
- (f) Strengthen institutional consistency and capacity with regard to migration, climate change and environment, through knowledge management, exchange of good practices and development of expertise throughout the Organization;
- (g) Increase the visibility of MECC issues to promote a balanced approach to human mobility, environment and climate change, with respect for human rights, through strengthened communication.

⁶ More information is available from www.iom.int/developmentfund/.