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MIGRATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AT IOM:

TAKING STOCK OF PROGRESS

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the membership about developments at IOM relating to migration, the environment and climate change since the Administration last briefed the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance on the subject, in April 2016. The fact that this is the fourth yearly update requested by IOM Member States in as many years reflects the growing importance of environmental migration to the membership.¹ The paper discusses institutional developments, contributions to relevant policy processes, notably IOM's role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and IOM activities relating to the environment and climate change in the process to develop the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Institutional developments relating to migration, the environment and climate change

2. Since the early 1990s, IOM has built a comprehensive programme of work on migration, the environment and climate change, one that spans policy, research, the development and deployment of data-collection tools, capacity-building, advocacy, partnerships, international migration law, communication, knowledge management, fundraising and operational activities. These developments are in line with the recognition of environmental migration as a key policy issue in the global governance of migration and of IOM's role, notably thanks to the Organization's work with the UNFCCC.

3. Following the establishment of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division within the Department of Migration Management at IOM Headquarters in January 2015, IOM has continued to actively build internal capacities to respond to growing challenges and opportunities. The Division is the first institutional structure in an intergovernmental organization to be fully devoted to questions of human mobility in relation to climate and the environment.

4. Since it last reported to the Standing Committee (see document S/18/8 of April 2016), the MECC Division has grown to a total of six staff members at Headquarters (three core positions, one supported by Operational Support Income and two project positions). In order to provide wider geographical coverage and pursue efforts to align thematic areas with the structure of other divisions in the Department of Migration Management, four thematic specialists were recruited in 2017 for the Regional Offices in Bangkok, Dakar, Nairobi and San José (the four positions had been approved by the Council in the Programme and Budget for 2016 and 2017). Though this represents significant progress, the structure is still not yet fully aligned with that of thematic specialists in other areas in each of the Regional Offices.

5. IOM has prioritized internal capacity-building efforts in order to deliver on its mid- and long-term strategic objectives, providing internal training in the Bangkok (2016) and Pretoria (2017) Regional Offices for 22 Country Offices in all. Six information sessions on

¹ Migration, the environment and climate change has been discussed at IOM governing body meetings on nine occasions since 2007: at the Council (see documents MC/INF/288 and C/105/49), at the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (see documents SCPF/21, SCPF/71, S/14/8, S/16/13 and S/18/8), and at the International Dialogue on Migration in 2008 and 2011.

environmental migration project development were organized in Regional and Country Offices in 2016, in order to encourage the development of cross-cutting activities. The MECC Division contributes to institution-wide initiatives such as the IOM Data Cluster Initiative (in collaboration with the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre in Berlin, Germany) and the Displacement Tracking Matrix, to improve the production, analysis and dissemination of data on environmental drivers of migration.

6. In 2017, the Division launched IOM's institutional programme of work on environmental sustainability. IOM recognizes that a healthy environment is intrinsically linked to the well-being and resilience of migrants and host communities. It has made an institutional commitment to improve the sustainability of its operations at the strategic, programmatic and operational levels, focusing on three key areas: energy, water and waste management. In 2017, after joining the United Nations Environment Management Group in order to adhere to United Nations sustainability standards, it carried out an organization-wide mapping exercise that identified over 100 IOM projects with an environmentally sustainable component and piloted the first greenhouse gas inventory in line with international standards (ISO 14001) at Headquarters and in one Regional and one Country Office. It also initiated new clean energy partnerships in line with the Organization's commitment to a Climate-Neutral United Nations, contributing to the European Union Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility, to the Vienna Energy Forum and to the Future Energy Forum, in order to highlight the significance of renewable energy in migration management activities. By the end of 2018, IOM will have developed an internal environmental policy; the related environmental management system will be developed between 2018 and 2020.

7. IOM's new status as a related organization of the United Nations system requires it to strengthen coordination with United Nations entities, including on environmental migration. The MECC Division has deployed one thematic specialist on a temporary basis to the IOM Mission to the United Nations in New York, to respond to the growing demand for specialized knowledge. It has reinforced existing partnerships and expanded cooperation with United Nations partners working on environmental migration issues, notably at United Nations Headquarters and by providing input on migration to the UN System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action. Moreover, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the UNFCCC Secretariat have both applied for observer status at the IOM Council, opening opportunities for strengthened collaboration on environmental migration.

IOM contributions to global policy processes relating to migration, the environment and climate change

8. Since the establishment of the MECC Division, the strategic vision for IOM's contributions to policy processes on migration, the environment and climate change has been two-pronged: to mainstream consideration of climate change, disasters, natural hazards and environmental degradation into migration-related processes; and to integrate human mobility concerns into environmental, climate change and related processes.

9. In terms of progress at migration policy level, the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration offers an unprecedented opportunity to anchor the environmental and climate dimensions of migration in the international migration governance agenda, mirroring the mainstreaming work accomplished within the UNFCCC and ensuring coherence across thematic policy areas. IOM strives to introduce environmental migration issues to the current discussions of the global compact on migration by United Nations Member States. To that end,

the MECC Division has written a thematic paper² articulating key issues and potential responses, contributed to relevant issue briefs produced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, and, together with the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations in New York, organized a side event that was held in tandem with the Second Informal Thematic Session, on the drivers of migration. IOM has also organized national and regional consultations on environmental migration, in order to help governments produce inputs for the overall global compact process.

10. In terms of international climate change policy, IOM supported the efforts of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC under the Moroccan Presidency to pursue implementation of the Paris Agreement. COP 22 (2016) featured an unprecedented number of events on migration, displacement and climate change, reflecting the topic's importance to States and non-State actors. IOM organized three of those events and took part in 18 others. It organized the first ever Technical Meeting on Migration, Displacement and Human Mobility under the UNFCCC (Casablanca, Morocco, July 2017), which was funded by France and whose outcomes fed directly into the work of the UNFCCC on climate change and human mobility. IOM's close cooperation with the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC was identified by the Mechanism as a key achievement in the report³ taking stock of the work accomplished under its initial two-year workplan and presented at COP 22. IOM has joined the Task Force on Displacement established under the Paris Agreement, and is spearheading several activities under the Task Force's 2017–2018 workplan in areas related to national, regional and international policy and practice and to data and assessment. Additionally, IOM is working actively on three fronts to ensure that human mobility concerns are addressed at COP 23 (2017) under the Fijian Presidency: at One UN level, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are heading the organization of the climate-related human mobility event; in terms of the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, an informal group of United Nations agencies, academics and non-governmental organizations established pursuant to paragraph 14(f), on migration, displacement and planned relocation, of the Cancun Adaptation Framework adopted at COP 16, IOM, as a founding member of the Group, is playing a lead role on numerous submissions, activities and events; and IOM is contributing to other events organized by partner organizations on issues such as displacement, human rights, oceans, land, water and food.

11. IOM welcomed the endorsement of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda in 2015 and fully supports the priorities identified to guide implementation of the Initiative's successor, the State-led Platform on Disaster Displacement, currently chaired by Germany. As a standing invitee on the Platform Steering Group IOM is providing key support for implementation of the Platform's 2016–2019 Workplan, which seeks to address the protection needs of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change. Furthermore, Germany has funded a programme officer position since July 2016, to strengthen capacity and mainstream activities under the Platform's Workplan within the scope of IOM's existing mandate. At no extra cost and within the approved funding, an additional research officer position was established in September 2017. Activities under the Workplan⁴ are directly in line with IOM's longstanding vision and action on displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Since the Platform's launch on 1 July 2016, IOM has

² See [Thematic Paper: Migrants and Migration Policy in the context of the Adverse Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation](#).

³ UNFCCC, *Report of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts*, document FCCC/SB/2016/3, 14 October 2016.

⁴ See IOM, *IOM activities in support of the Platform on Disaster Displacement Workplan*, 1 July 2016–30 June 2017.

provided expertise for a wide range of activities under its four Strategic Priorities, including addressing knowledge and data gaps, supporting governmental capacity-building, developing practical tools and solutions to address disaster displacement, promoting the mainstreaming of disaster displacement in key global and regional policy dialogues, and supporting policy development. As an example, with the financial support of the Government of France, and as part of the Platform's Workplan, IOM has developed a project for returning migrants in West Africa that involves innovative climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

12. IOM provided expert support for the organization of the Global Forum on Migration and Development Thematic Workshop on "Climate Change and Human Mobility" (24 May 2017, Rabat, Morocco) and has produced analyses of how the migration, environment and climate change nexus fits in with the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵ In addition, more and more global policy processes are incorporating a human mobility angle and calling upon expert inputs from IOM; notable examples are the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the fifth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Moreover, IOM has actively shared its expertise with the Human Rights Council through submissions on the recommendations set out in Human Rights Council resolution 35/20 on human rights and climate change, and as part of the preparations for the intersessional panel discussion on human rights, climate change, migrants and persons displaced across international borders. Resolution 35/20 specifically refers to IOM's work: "Noting also the work being undertaken in the context of the adverse impact of climate change by international organizations and relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, including the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division in the International Organization for Migration".

13. IOM has also started working on other angles to environmental migration at the policy level, contributing to the United Nations Ocean Conference in June 2017; engaging with the Geneva Water Hub (the Secretariat of the Global High-level Panel on Water and Peace); and promoting awareness of human rights, migration and climate change at the 36th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. It has forged new partnerships, for example with the Ocean and Climate Platform, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Australian National University, on breaking new ground in thematic areas such as oceans (*Ocean, Environment, Climate Change and Human Mobility*, IOM, 2016) and extreme heat (*Extreme Heat and Migration*, IOM, 2017) and the impact on migration.

14. As migration in the context of climate and environmental change gains visibility across policy agendas, IOM has made it a priority to consolidate existing partnerships and cooperation mechanisms on environmental migration with key migration bodies and climate and environmental stakeholders. It intends to avoid duplication and ensure that relevant, up-to-date and correct data are available and donor resources used efficiently. Such partnerships exist, for example, with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNHCR, the International Labour Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. In this context, IOM produced joint publications with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, and is on the peer review team of a World Bank 2017–2018 study with a focus on climate change and migration.

⁵ See IOM, *Migration in the 2030 Agenda* (IOM, 2017).

IOM's activities on migration, the environment and climate change

15. IOM develops and implements innovative programmatic activities in all parts of the world. Since the creation of the new project tracking code on the environment and climate change in April 2016, six new projects focusing entirely on environmental migration have been funded for a total of USD 8.5 million, while several others have included aspects of environmental migration as a secondary component. In total, 23 projects have been developed and are in various stages of finalization and approval for submission to donors. The IOM Development Fund continues to provide seed funding for projects to build national capacity in response to environmental migration challenges, with two projects to be implemented in the Lake Chad Basin by four countries: Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria.

16. IOM continues to implement its comprehensive capacity-building programme targeting policymakers across policy areas. In 2016 and 2017, it reached 135 policymakers in seven countries (Azerbaijan, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique and Namibia), in addition to 40 policymakers in the Central America region (in collaboration with the Platform on Disaster Displacement). The programme uses *Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Training Manual (Facilitator's Guide)*, which is available in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian and Azerbaijani) and was rolled out in eight capacity-building workshops in 2016 and 2017.

17. IOM Regional and Country Offices have identified environmental migration as a key area of development. In the IOM 2016 institutional questionnaire, nine Country Offices identified environmental migration outcomes as one of their top achievements. However, 26 Country Offices indicated that environmental migration was one of their most underfunded areas, highlighting a funding gap estimated at USD 985,000 for 2018. The MECC Division is working with the Office of the Inspector General on an evaluation of IOM innovative approaches for addressing environmental concerns and implementing related institutional strategies, in order to determine what works and what responses are most relevant to governments.

18. To supplement the over 100 publications and reports on environmental migration produced in recent years, in 2016 and 2017 IOM released three new flagship publications, four policy papers, eight policy briefs, six national country profiles and four infosheets on migration, the environment and climate change, and wrote eight articles for external publishers.⁶

19. In terms of communication, the IOM Environmental Migration Portal (www.environmentalmigration.iom.int) continued to prove useful for sharing knowledge and news on environmental migration, and eight new webpages were created. The Portal attracted 22,909 users and had 92,425 page views in 2016 alone. Ten issues of the Environmental Migration Portal Newsletter (in English) were released, with the number of subscribers almost doubling between January 2016 and August 2017. The MECC Division responded to over 20 media requests, and developed six new social media campaigns (gaining 1,460 new Twitter followers), six blogposts and six videos.

20. IOM is committed to continue addressing the nexus between migration, the environment and climate change, including environmental sustainability, through advocacy, operational activities, policy dialogue and capacity-building, in line with the priorities put forward by its Member States.

⁶ See www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/environment-series-flyer for a list of all such publications.