



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

S/16/13
RESTRICTED

Original: English
3 June 2015

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Sixteenth Session

MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES AND PRIORITIES FOR POLICY ACTION

MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE: INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES AND PRIORITIES FOR POLICY ACTION

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the membership about the transformational institutional advances made by IOM on the complex issue of migration, environment and climate change and about IOM's contribution to the Twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP 21, Paris, 2015) and other relevant 2015 policy processes regarding human mobility in the context of climate change and environmental degradation.

Institutional developments on migration, environment and climate change

2. IOM has been active in this field since the early 1990s. In the past few years it has built a comprehensive programme of work spanning policy, research, development of data-collection tools and data collection, capacity-building, advocacy, development of partnerships, international migration law, communication, knowledge management, fundraising and operational activities.

3. In recognition of the growing relevance of IOM's role in the global governance of environmental migration, the membership has elected to discuss the migration, environment and climate change nexus on several occasions since 2007, at meetings of the Standing Committee for Programmes and Finance (see documents SCPF/71 and S/14/8) and of the Council (see documents MC/INF/288 and MC/2239/Rev.1), and as part of the 2008, 2011 and 2012 International Dialogues on Migration.

4. Last year represented a landmark for the theme's development at the institutional level: it was discussed at the Fourteenth Session of the Standing Committee and at the 105th Session of the Council. The latter featured a high-level segment, a high-level luncheon and an exhibition, all dedicated to the question of human mobility in the context of environmental and climate change.

5. On 1 January of this year, in consideration of a number of factors – the membership's request that greater prominence be given to migration in the context of climate and environmental change; the greater relevance of environmental and climate-induced migration on international policy agendas; the enhanced cooperation with environmental and climate-focused partners; the rise in activities focusing on migration, environment and climate change; the recommendations made in the 2014 IOM structural review – the Director General established the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division within the Department of Migration Management at IOM Headquarters in Geneva.

6. The issue of migration, environment and climate change matured on IOM's institutional agenda through a twofold process: operational activities worldwide grew to address the needs of environmental migrants, and in-depth conceptual and policy work was undertaken to frame the issues. In that context, the new Division was formed to better connect IOM policy, evidence-building and operational activities.

7. The Division is the first institutional unit in an intergovernmental organization fully devoted to questions of human mobility in relation to climate and the environment. It comes as an assertion of the importance of climate change and migration and marks IOM's commitment to respond to human mobility matters in relation to climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters.

8. The Division has the institutional responsibility to oversee, support and coordinate the development of policy guidance for activities with a migration, environment and climate change dimension. It formulates global strategies that address human mobility in the context of environmental change in relation to land degradation, natural disasters and the impact of climate change on livelihoods; it mainstreams environmental and climatic factors in other migration management sectors, and integrates migration matters into external regional and global processes dealing with climate and the environment.

9. The Division will coordinate and cooperate with all other IOM departments, as its activities cut across various institutional entities. It will work in particular with the Departments of Migration Management, International Cooperation and Partnerships, and Operations and Emergencies to address the linkages between climate change adaptation, natural disasters, the environment and migration from a human mobility perspective, with a view to fostering sustainable development and promoting managed migration respectful of human rights.

10. In order to meet its objectives, the Division has prioritized internal capacity-building and policy guidance efforts. *Migration Initiatives 2015: Regional Strategies* highlights migration, environment and climate change as a global area of crucial concern, with all IOM Regional Strategies having identified the issue as a priority for action and funding needs estimated at USD 8 million. In September 2015, therefore, the Division will deliver its first internal training course for colleagues designated as migration, environment and climate change focal points and based in Regional Offices and Offices with Special Functions, with a view to capacitating IOM staff to develop activities with an appropriate focus. Furthermore, given the complexity of the tasks described above, the resources allocated to the Division will be reviewed during the 2016 budget process.

Migration in the year of global action on climate and beyond

11. IOM is committed to contributing to ambitious climate action and to helping societies adapt to existing and future climate change challenges. In 2015 it will focus on its contribution to the negotiations on the new climate change agreement expected to be adopted at COP 21 in December in Paris.

12. It is now recognized that the movement of people is intrinsically linked to climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "*Climate change is projected to increase the displacement of people throughout this century.*"¹ Research and consultations point to increasingly strong linkages between the impact of climate change and migration, indicating that the consequences of global warming are already driving human mobility.

¹ IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, 2014), Chapter 12. Available from: <https://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/report/full-report/>.

13. According to the available data, significant numbers of people are affected by natural disasters worldwide. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates,² on the basis of country data collected by IOM worldwide, that natural disasters led to the internal displacement of 22 million people in 2013 and over 164 million people between 2008 and 2013.

14. IOM's work on migration, environment and climate change is predicated on the rationale that approaches to human mobility can help craft better climate change policies and that migration policies cannot ignore environmental and climate factors. IOM is therefore working with numerous partners to put human mobility on the agenda of the negotiations for the new global climate change agreement to be signed at COP 21 in Paris in December 2015.

15. IOM is committed to mainstreaming human mobility concerns in all the substantive pillars of the new agreement, i.e. adaptation (including facilitated migration as a strategy for adapting to climate change), loss and damage in relation to displacement, mitigation and the impact of migration on environmental degradation, financing (including possible financial transfers to developing countries vulnerable to climate change), technological development and transfers (including diaspora contributions and investment), and capacity-building to support the efforts of policymakers to address the many challenges of human mobility in the context of climate change.

16. IOM activities relating to environmental degradation in the context of climate change build on the governing body deliberations of 2014 and are in line with the commitments made at the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Summit (New York, 2014), the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (Samoa, 2014), and the Twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Peru, 2014). They are also in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted in March 2015.

17. IOM is working from a number of angles to ensure that migration will feature in the new climate change agreement to be negotiated in Paris at the end of the year.

- (a) It is producing technical papers in collaboration with the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility,³ for submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat and the negotiating parties. The papers focus on the development of technical guidelines and policy support relating to the incorporation of migration into national adaptation plans and intended nationally determined contributions.
- (b) It is enhancing its strategic partnerships for greater visibility and improved action on migration, the environment and climate, focusing on the land and migration nexus with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and on disaster-induced displacement across borders with the Nansen Initiative. It is developing activities with other key players, such the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the World Meteorological Organization, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. In addition, it is providing official statements on migration

² IDMC/Norwegian Refugee Council, *Global Estimates 2014: People Displaced by Disasters* (Geneva, 2014).

³ Agencies represented on the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, the Norwegian Refugee Council and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. The Group provides UNFCCC Parties with technical support and the most up-to-date knowledge, to ensure that human mobility is taken into consideration in global climate negotiations.

issues to key climate processes led by agencies such as the International Labour Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the World Health Organization.

- (c) IOM is producing fresh evidence of the complex linkages between migration and climate change, conducting a research and policy coherence-building project entitled *Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy* in six pilot countries, producing the first global Atlas of Environmental Migration and issuing numerous policy briefs, information sheets and publications, such as *IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change* and *The State of Environmental Migration 2014 – A Review of 2013*.
- (d) IOM is working to enhance the capacities of policymakers to address challenges and opportunities related to human mobility. In this regard, it has developed a full-fledged capacity-building programme that includes the first training manual on migration, environment and climate change and relevant training sessions, with support from the European Commission-funded Migration, Environment and Climate – Evidence for Policy project.⁴ It is also implementing a range of capacity-building workshops with support from the IOM Development Fund⁵ and with national and regional counterparts.⁶
- (e) IOM is active in the UN High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate and contributes to common action to promote the climate change agreement. Specifically, it has taken the lead on climate and human mobility side events and exhibits at COP 21 and at preparatory meetings such as the Bonn and Geneva Climate Change Conferences to be held in June and October 2015, respectively.
- (f) Finally, IOM has made it a priority to address the needs of the countries most vulnerable to climate change because of their geographic location and socioeconomic development level. It has therefore stepped up cooperation with the Climate Vulnerable Forum and its Trust Fund, and with the United Nations Development Programme. The Climate Vulnerable Forum views migration and displacement as critical areas of concern in relation to climate change; participating countries are seeking an enhanced multilateral response in this sector, in particular via capacity-building programmes.

18. In terms of strategic involvement in 2015, IOM contributes substantively to the Nansen Initiative, acknowledging that enhanced international policy attention is being given to human mobility in the context of environmental degradation, climate change and disaster risk reduction. As a Standing Invitee of the Nansen Steering Group, a member of the Nansen Initiative Consultative Committee and a participant in the Nansen Group of Friends, IOM has made substantial and regular contributions to Nansen Initiative activities. It has mobilized its worldwide network of experts in regional, national and subnational offices for each of the Nansen Initiative Regional Consultations and Civil Society Consultations and for research papers.

⁴ In 2015, policymakers are being trained in the project's six pilot countries: the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Kenya, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam.

⁵ In 2015 and 2016, policymakers will be trained with support from the IOM Development Fund in the following countries: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Mali, Morocco and Nepal.

⁶ Regional training sessions were organized in the Republic of Korea in 2013, the United Republic of Tanzania in 2014, and Chile in 2014.

19. The Nansen draft Protection Agenda echoes the all-encompassing framework IOM has developed in the eight years since it established a migration, environment and climate change focal point and workstream in 2007 to address migration in relation to disasters, environmental degradation and climate change through a range of policy options. IOM is therefore willing and able to play a significant role in the next stages of the Initiative and to facilitate implementation of the Agenda based on its mandate, expertise, experience, geographical reach and worldwide presence and field capacities.

20. Based on its mandate and experience, and according to priorities defined by the membership and in partnership with relevant organizations, IOM is committed to continue addressing the migration, environment and climate change nexus through policy dialogue, capacity-building and operational activities. Using a results-based approach, it will seek to achieve three outcomes by 2020: (a) targeted international, regional and national stakeholders and forums recognize the role of human mobility in frameworks addressing climate change and request and act on IOM's advice and support; (b) IOM anticipates and acts on future opportunities and needs in respect of migration, environment and climate change; (c) other stakeholders recognize IOM as an agenda-setter on such matters.