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SUBMISSION TO THE TASK FORCE ON DISPLACEMENT STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Recommendations addressing displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change

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This submission offers some key recommendations on addressing displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change that relate to the two topics identified in the Call for Submissions for the Task Force on Displacement Stakeholder Meeting, namely:

1. *integrated approaches based on good practices and lessons learned at relevant levels (subnational to global) to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change;* and
2. *possible measures to address key legal, policy and institutional challenges for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.*

As part of this joint effort, we would like to emphasize the potential role of the local level, in particular of local authorities, in contributing to the establishment of an integrated approach to deal with the adverse effects of environmental changes and human mobility. The role of local authorities is acquiring great significance in multilevel migration governance, and they are well positioned to contribute to addressing some of the persisting protection challenges faced by vulnerable populations in the context of climate change. Our recommendations are based on the preliminary results of the ongoing Horizon 2020 project, Climate Security with Local Authorities (CLISEL).¹

As regards the first topic on integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change, we recommend 1) to adopt a **multilevel approach** to the issues at hand and 2) to strengthen **international cooperation**.

(1) The multilevel approach should be framed as a system of *multilevel governance* of the relevant issues, which includes all levels of governance, in particular local/subnational authorities. In the context of migration governance, an increasing awareness of the need to involve local authorities in the law- and policy-making process is becoming apparent. For instance, very recently, the *Global Conference on*

¹ CLISEL is a Horizon 2020 project, funded by the European Union and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education (SERI). The aims of the CLISEL project are to explore the climate–security nexus from the perspective of local administrations and communities, with a special focus on the Italian region of Sardinia, chosen for a pilot case-study. During our initial phase we conducted workshops and activities with mayors in the Sardinia Region for the purpose of identifying their priorities and understanding which issues are most relevant. For more information, see www.clisel.eu.



Cities and Migration, adopted the *Mechelen Declaration on Cities and Migration*,² stressing that including “[...] local authorities in governance mechanisms can strengthen coordinated action, shape a positive discourse on migration and enhance social and economic integration of migrants” [para. 2].³ In particular, the CLISEL pilot case-study identified the need to reinforce the relationship between the central government and the local governmental entities in order to avoid underestimating the usefulness of including representation from the lower level and to prevent their marginalization in the current debate. Specifically, there is a concrete risk that “they will find themselves on the frontline in addressing climate change and migration, but without the resources and institutional remit to govern and adapt to these challenges”.⁴ Representatives of Sardinian local authorities highlighted the difficulties in achieving efficient coordination and dialogue with both national and European institutions on the effective implementation of migration policies and perceived a lack of adequate measures to protect vulnerable populations affected by environmental changes.

Coordination between the local level and all the other relevant actors can be promoted through the already existing networks of local authorities at the international level. This has the advantage of offering a means of channelling the different voices and experiences of the individual local authorities in a more structured way.

Building dialogue and networks at different levels of governance should be further encouraged in order to guarantee a multilevel approach and to increase interconnectedness;

(2) The role played by local authorities at the international level is growing significantly.⁵ Their engagement has recently been affirmed in the revised draft of the Global Compact for Migration (Objective 23)⁶ to ensure effective international cooperation. It is acknowledged that local authorities benefit from governance mechanisms when it comes to sharing best practices and/or coordinating themselves on common actions. This was the case, for instance, of the fifth European Union Capitals Mayors’ Meeting, which took place in 2016 in Amsterdam, where 28 EU capitals agreed to create a solidarity network to deal with migration.⁷ Another example is the International Urban Cooperation (IUC)⁸ programme, which is aimed at promoting IUC and supporting UN-Habitat III, the Paris COP 21 Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Our recommendation is to

² More than 50 cities from Europe, North, Central and South America, Asia and Africa were represented at the event, which was organized by Belgium’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and UN-Habitat.

³ *Mechelen Declaration on cities and migration*, Outcome document from *The Global Conference on Cities and Migration*, Mechelen, Belgium (16–17 November 2017), available at https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/Mechelen-Declaration-final.pdf.

⁴ See the results of the workshops at <http://www.clisel.eu/Deliverables/D4.9.pdf>.

⁵ See for instance: the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), the Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development, the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis – World Association of the Major Metropolises, the EU Capital Mayors’ Meetings, the European Regional and Local Authorities on Asylum and Immigration (ERLAI) Project, the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform and the International Urban Cooperation (IUC).

⁶ Objective 23 (Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration), let. c), which calls, among others, for the involvement of local authorities “[...] in the identification of needs and opportunities for international cooperation for the effective implementation of the Global Compact and integrate their perspectives and priorities into development strategies, programmes and planning on migration, as a means to ensure good governance as well as policy coherence across levels of government and policy sectors, and maximize the effectiveness and impact of international development cooperation”.

⁷ See all relevant information at <http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/agenda-item/eu-capitals-mayors-meeting-amsterdam>.

⁸ See all relevant information at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/international/urban/.





address the risk of lack of connection between climate change and migration policies and to involve local authorities in this effort.

The active commitment of local authorities should be further encouraged and be more focused on the topics of displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change, linking with their involvement in other issue-areas such as migration governance.

As regards the second topic, we recommend that possible measures to address key legal, policy and institutional challenges for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change should include (1) **conceptualization** of the relationship between environmental changes and human mobility and identification for adaptive protection, (2) measures to facilitate **adaptive migration**:

(1) The need to strengthen common efforts on the conceptualization and identification of the multi-causal dimension of the relationship between environmental changes and human mobility was one of the findings of the CLISEL case-study on the Italian Region of Sardinia.⁹ A clarification of the legal dimension of the phenomenon of migration, and its implications, appeared to be crucial to ensure adequate protection in the context of cross-border mobility.¹⁰

(2) In line with this, the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive approach to ensure the entry and the stay of affected populations are also relevant. Looking at the regional context, and at the EU in particular, it is noteworthy that there is no dedicated *ad hoc* entry mechanism to facilitate the entry of people from countries affected by environmental changes. This situation was also emphasized by the CLISEL pilot case-study, where available mechanisms at domestic level were considered to be insufficient to develop a coherent and harmonized approach to cross-border disaster displacement.

To conclude, the *status quo* can be improved, and we recommend the Task Force on Disaster Displacement to include the desirability of increasing dialogue and cooperation with all the levels of governance in its recommendations, to avoid fragmentation and increase the legitimacy of all actors.

⁹ See the results from the Workshop on "Migration as adaptation?" available at http://www.clisel.eu/Pilot_Case.

¹⁰ See the results of the CLISEL pilot case study available at http://www.clisel.eu/Pilot_Case.