



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

First session of the International Dialogue on Migration 2021

Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change

25-27 May 2021, Zoom, 9:00-12:00, New York local time (EST)

Concept Note

Initiated in 2001, the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) is the prime migration policy dialogue of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), open to States and a wide range of migration stakeholders worldwide. The IDM has enabled the IOM “to provide a forum for States as well as international and other organizations for the exchange of views and experiences and the promotion of cooperation and coordination of efforts on international migration issues, including studies on such issues in order to develop practical solutions”, as stated in the Organization’s Constitution.

Objectives of the first session of the IDM 2021

In 2011, one session of the IDM was dedicated to the emerging nexus between migration, environment and climate change. Ten years later, IOM is revisiting the topic at a time of increasing political urgency, and in view of the deep impacts of the COVID-19 global health crisis linking climate and migration to current and future development issues. In this first IDM session of the year, IOM aims to contribute to the political momentum building towards the 26th

Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26), taking place in Glasgow, in November 2021.

The IDM will offer a space to discuss some of the key dimensions of the migration, environment and climate change nexus, such as developing synergies between the implementation of relevant international and regional frameworks, integrating migration and climate questions in COVID-19 recovery efforts, leveraging migrants' contributions to climate action and identifying challenges faced by countries most vulnerable to climate change (small island developing states, landlocked countries, least developed countries). The dialogue will explore how the issue is connected to the Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus (HDPN). This event will also be an opportunity to build on the current momentum around the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), reinforce the progressive language in the GCM on migration, environment, and climate change, galvanize support from Member States and other - stakeholders, and showcase initiatives that the UN system, GCM champions and stakeholders are taking in this field.

The discussions will assess actions to mitigate the impacts of climate and environmental change, linked to the broader implementation of global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the GCM, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In that respect, this IDM session will examine how upcoming international forums, such as the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the 2021 UNFCCC COP26, and the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), can best integrate migration, environment and climate change issues in their work programmes and enhance synergies and partnerships across policy areas.

Context

Climate change and environmental degradation are profoundly reshaping contemporary migration patterns worldwide in diverse ways. In the context of a changing environment, people engage in different forms of migration within their countries or across borders. These forms of migration exist on a continuum, from displacement to more voluntary forms of migration.

Migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation is often multicausal and most people migrate due to a combination of social, political, economic and demographic conditions, all of which are and will be affected by climate and environmental change. Migration in turn can impact the environment and the availability of natural resources. However, migrants can also be actor of the fight against climate change and can contribute to making communities and societies in places of origin and destination more resilient and able to adapt to the negative impacts of environmental and climate change.

In 2019, 24.9 million new internal displacements across 140 countries were linked to sudden-onset disasters, such as flooding and extreme weather events, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).¹ Slow onset processes such as desertification, sea level rise and land degradation can also influence directly and indirectly the decision to migrate. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency, intensity and geographical impacts of these phenomena, and will drive future humanitarian crises and displacement.

Looking at the future, some projections indicate that millions more people could be on the move because of the adverse effects of climate change, with an estimated 143 million internal climate migrants by 2050 if no action is taken.² Climate change and environmental degradation will also lead to impoverishment and destitution, resulting in people being unable to leave at-risk areas, thereby creating additional vulnerability for so-called “trapped populations”.

Policy advances

Since 2015, key international commitments of relevance to migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation have been internationally agreed upon. The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development features migration explicitly and seven of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on climate and environmental issues (SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, and SDG 15). The 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change led to the creation of the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement and the development of recommendations in 2018 that were a policy milestone. In 2018, the GCM recognized under its Objective 2 on Minimizing drivers, the significance of “natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation” and the challenges they pose in terms of migration. The GCM also contains references to “sudden-onset natural disasters, slow-onset environmental degradation” under Objective 5 on Enhancing availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

COVID-19 and the migration, environment and climate change nexus

Issues pertaining to the migration, environment and climate change nexus remain underdiscussed in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing global recovery efforts. The dialogue will therefore build on discussions and findings from the 2020 IDM session dedicated to “COVID-19 crisis: reimagining the role of migrants and human mobility of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”. Recovery efforts should contribute to the

¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020

² World Bank, Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration

transition to a green economy and build climate resilience, create green jobs and support effective climate action and efforts to reach carbon neutrality. Opportunities should be created so migrants can contribute to and benefit from green recovery efforts. The inclusion of migration health considerations in environmental and climate policies and dialogues could contribute to building health resilience in communities facing adverse effects of environmental and climate change that impacts migration decisions.

This IDM session will also emphasize the linkages between the migration, environment and climate change nexus and migrant health, looking at the connections between SDG 10.7 “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” and SDG 3.8 “achieve universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all”. The discussion will contribute to global initiatives that promote a sustainable recovery to COVID-19, such as the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the European Union’s Green Deal and the 2021 United States Leaders’ Climate Summit.

Structure of the IDM session

The session will be structured around several areas of focus, including:

- 1) Accelerating action to address migration and displacement in the context of climate change and environmental degradation, towards the preparations of the 26th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP26);
- 2) Understanding the linkages between COVID-19, migrant health and the migration, environment and climate change nexus and promoting the inclusion of the environmental migration dimensions in COVID-19 recovery efforts;
- 3) Examining the linkages between the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus (HDPN) and the migration, environment and climate change nexus;
- 4) Developing multi-stakeholder approaches, including with the private sector, to leverage opportunities and support the inclusion of migrants to build a sustainable future;
- 5) Promoting and supporting regional and local action on migration, environment and climate change.

In line with existing practices, IOM invites all concerned parties working on migration, climate change and environment issues, including high-level government representatives, migrant

representatives, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations, to contribute their views, best practices and recommendations on the topic.

On the 70th anniversary of IOM and the 20th anniversary of the IDM, IOM is more than ever committed to foster greater cooperation and enhance cross-sectoral partnerships to develop and implement collective actions that concretely address the increasingly complex and interconnected migration challenges of today. The outcomes of this session are expected to highlight good practices, lessons learned and recommendations that can support governments and other stakeholders to develop and implement inclusive policies and programmes to address issues linked to the migration, environment and climate change nexus and maximize opportunities. The results and recommendations of the Dialogue will be published in the IDM Red Book which will be made available to all contributors and participants. These recommendations will also feed into upcoming events and forum, including the UNFCCC COP26 and the International Migration Review Forum.