Event Title:  
Displacement and the Climate Crisis - The imperative of localized, inclusive and gender-responsive climate action  

Date and time:  
20 June 2022 – 8h30 – 10h00 EST  

Sponsors:  Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, European Union and United States of America  
Organizers: CARE International, IFRC, IOM, OCHA, UNHCR, World Vision International  

Objective: This event shares examples of and seeks to learn lesson from localized, inclusive and gender-responsive climate action in the context of preventing or responding to displacement.  

Background/context:  
Disasters and the adverse effects of climate change have become an ever more significant driver of displacement and increasingly complicate the search for solutions for those already displaced. The UN Secretary-General’s recently launched his Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and calls for a dramatic scale-up of our efforts on risk reduction, preparedness and climate change adaptation, with particular consideration for countries that are highly vulnerable, whose capacities are overstretched, or that are already grappling with disaster displacement or other forms of loss and damage linked to the adverse effects of climate change.  
The Action Agenda also highlights the importance of ensuring that risk reduction, preparedness and adaptation efforts are pursued with the active participation of local communities. Indeed, local authorities, civil society organizations, women-led organisations, faith actors, and others in affected communities – including displaced persons and their hosts – are the first responders in humanitarian emergencies, including those amplified by the climate crisis. Moreover, they are the most knowledgeable about their own needs, and the best advisers on what approaches are suited in their local area. Locally driven solutions and mechanisms, through inclusive and just processes, and the strengthening of local institutions, are essential to assist people to adapt to climate change, mitigate disaster risks, and prevent displacement.  
Climate change deepens existing gender inequalities, disproportionately impacting women and girls. When displaced, they often face increased protection risks such as gender-based violence, exploitation and trafficking and reduced access to health-services. Socio-cultural norms, restricted livelihood options, and lack of access to safety nets, technologies, and
information often limit displaced women’s adaptive capacities, regularly compounded by their lack of financial assets and limited rights to land and property. Laws, policies, and strategies on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are not yet sufficiently gender responsive. The leadership and active involvement of women and girls in the design of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, including to prevent and mitigate displacement, is essential to finding climate solutions and holding decision-makers accountable to their commitments to addressing climate displacement, including in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, The Global Compact on Refugees, and the Grand Bargain, amongst others. Women and girls have a unique perspective and knowledge to contribute to action and decision-making on building resilience of their communities. Failing to leverage their local knowledge may perpetuate inequalities and decrease effectiveness of action. Gender-responsive approaches to the climate crisis require that women play a critical role in response and prevention, both locally and at the leadership level.

Panel Members: (names, titles, and organizations)

- Mr. Mohamad Atiqul Islam – Mayor of Dhaka North, Bangladesh, co-lead of the C40-MMC Global Mayors Task Force on Migration and Climate Change and C40 Vice-chair on migration;
- Dr. Glynis Harrison, Secretary-General of the Namibia Red Cross Society;
- Mr. Jorge Galeano, Executive Director, World Vision Honduras and Guatemala;
- Ms. Nadeen Abdulqader, Representative Tamdeen Youth Foundation, Yemen.

Panel was co-chaired and wrapped up by:
- IOM’s Deputy Director General for Operations, Ugochi Daniels, and
- UNHCR’s Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements

Main points raised by each speaker/panelist:

Bangladesh Permanent Representative Rabab Fatima
- Bangladesh experiencing worst floods of a decade, adding to food insecurity, disease, potential displacement, all will put pressure on cities
- The IPCC report estimates that 17% of people in Bangladesh will need to be relocated over next decade if climate impacts continue at current pace; WB estimates that by 2050 impacts of climate could displace 216 million people
- Goes beyond internal displacement; need to acknowledge risk of cross-border displacement
- The world has to share the responsibility for those displaced by impacts of climate change
- Responses must be context specific considering different needs of displaced and host communities, urban areas impacted differently than rural
- Need for evidence and disaggregated data on root causes of displacement and their impacts on the communities
- Women and girls are more impacted (including because of housing, land and property rights); they must be able to participate in prevention and response
- Local initiatives are nothing without global commitments to climate funding and climate action
- She highlighted that the IPCC report put specific focus on migration as an adaptive response to climate change and noted that it is critical to ensure that the people forced to leave their homes and cross the borders due to the adverse impacts of climate change are offered safe, regular and orderly options for migration
- Support for displaced in the context of climate change needed, look forward to progress on loss and damage at COP27
UNHCR DHC Clements

- Disasters and climate drive displacement—22 million displacements due to weather-events last year—will continue to rise unless urgent action
- Displaced are caught in intersection between climate and conflict in countries of origin and displacement
- Climate change is global but felt locally and impacts communities differently
- SG Action Agenda on IDPs—calls for scale up of climate action, particularly in most vulnerable countries
- It also highlights importance of participation of local communities, including marginalized groups
- Impacts of climate change disproportionately impact women and girls—including destruction of agricultural livelihoods
- Displacement exacerbates impact on women and girls including heightened risk of violence
- Gender responsive approaches to climate change mean women need a critical role, both locally and at leadership

IOM DDG Daniels

- Climate change and extreme weather are triggers of displacement, affect livelihoods and increase competition over resources.
- Combined with existing pressures on peace and security, climate change impacts are likely to be catastrophic for some communities and intolerable for many others.
- Collective work towards anticipating new patterns of population mobility, preparing, responding, and seeking durable solution for displacement is pivotal
- This urgency of human mobility and climate change also resonated at the last International Migration Review Forum, where Member States also highlighted good practices
- While the localization principle is widely endorsed, the modalities to develop localized responses that are gender responsive are often overlooked and multifaceted. Need to place local actors, especially women-led, at center of climate efforts
- Strengthen gender analysis and disaggregated data to inform policy and decision
- Displacement and localization can’t be addressed without looking at urbanization
- SG’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement clearly stated that more of the same is not enough

Mr. Mohamad Atiquil Islam, Mayor of Dhaka North, Bangladesh

- Emphasized imperative of local, inclusive and gender responsive action
- Recalled specific impact of climate change on Bangladesh, which is amongst most climate vulnerable countries, especially in coastal areas and made link between climate, livelihoods, and displacement.
- 2,000 people move to Dhaka, of which 70% migrate due to climate change; this puts the local population but also the municipality under pressure to provide services, access to housing, water, sanitation, security.
- Described some efforts of Bangladesh to reduce carbon footprint (LED streetlights, roof gardens, metro rail)
- Urban planners must consider human mobility in context of climate change
- Involve cities in development of national climate migration, development policies, and national strategies to manage migration and displacement
- create or invest in financing mechanisms that the city governments can directly access, such as the global cities fund for migrants and refugees
- Include and leverage diaspora communities in supporting preparedness, mitigation, and response efforts. Diaspora remittances could support climate vulnerable cities
- Climate, Covid, and conflict—an incorrect approach on any could be catastrophic
- In response to a question on evictions of street dwellers, noted difficult balance between pressure to clean up cities and a humanitarian approach to poor and displaced
Dr. Glynis Harrison Secretary-General of the Namibia Red Cross Society

- Most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by impact of climate change
- Climate change is driving humanitarian crisis and displacement
- Described Red Cross assistance to people affected by drought in Angola, who were displaced cross-border to Namibia; local communities were first responders
- Strong working relationships with local authorities and community engagement plays an important role, including consultations with affected people
- Localized, gender sensitive, contextualized efforts are necessary to respond to different risks and needs – there is no one solution that fits all
- Don’t wait for people to move, there is a need to build resilience, reduce risk and scale up anticipatory action
- Local communities and affected people are at the forefront of collective action and can share information and experiences to inform humanitarian responses
- Responding to a question, she recalled a high number of women and children in displacement with specific needs and particular cultural sensitivities
- It is important for the community to participate in response

Mr. Jorge Galeano, World Vision National Director, Honduras and Guatemala

- Honduras is particularly climate vulnerable, thousands are forcibly displaced, 2.8 million in need of humanitarian aid, impact of climate, violence, and politics
- Last two decades—decrease of 15% in land for cultivation, due to climate, including drought
- Impact greater on women and children
- WV working on food security—price increases and food availability
- Faith leaders were leaders in hurricane Iota and Eta response in 2021 and helped humanitarian organizations identify people in need and provide support
- Pre-positioning is key to save lives and alleviate suffering
- Critical role of women, including volunteers in shelters
- Investment required—funds diverted from Latin America to other crises, like Ukraine
- Need triple nexus approach, not just humanitarian, but development and peacebuilding approaches are required to address the challenges. He noted the need to work in collaboration, as no actor can do it alone.
- In response to question on link between climate and criminal violence in Honduras—noted cycle of food insecurity, poverty, displacement, violence

Ms. Nadeen Abdulqader, Tamdeen Youth Foundation, Yemen

- Recalled the devastating floods in Aden, which came on top of existing humanitarian crisis, followed by Covid
- Broken health care system, floods added to water borne diseases
- Families were stuck in homes, submerged in water and mud
- Civilians killed and injured, homes and infrastructure destroyed
- Yemen needs:
  - An emergency fund for natural disaster
  - Early warning system for critical change in climate and the environment
  - Triple nexus approach, funding for youth and women for economic empowerment
  - MS to move from truce to peace talks and end the war so displaced can return

Key messages of the side event:
• Climate change affects different parts of the world differently, requiring a concrete evidence base of good practices to assist policymakers and practitioners to ensure that efforts addressing climate-related displacement are tailored to the diverse needs and respecting the rights of the people affected.

• Local actors, including forcibly displaced communities and their hosts, must be at the forefront of preventing, adapting to and responding to climate-related displacement.

• Gender-responsive approaches to the climate crisis require that women play a critical role in response and prevention, both locally and at the leadership level. Failing to leverage their local knowledge may perpetuate inequalities and decrease effectiveness of action.

• While examples of policies, plans and interventions exist that demonstrate the potential for inclusive, gender-responsive solutions to prevent and respond to displacement in the context of climate change, these should become the norm and they should be sustainably resourced.

• The negative effects of climate change on society, including forced displacement, are not inevitable: through appropriate measures and policies reducing disaster risks, promoting development, strengthening communities' resilience, and facilitating orderly migration as a strategy, coupled with effective climate change mitigation efforts, we can adapt to the challenge if action is taken immediately and accelerated.

• Climate adaptation financing is a priority and should be directed more to the countries most vulnerable to climate change, with amongst them many countries facing displacement and humanitarian emergencies.

• Addressing climate-related displacement requires efforts across all phases of disaster and crises (prevention, preparedness, climate adaptation and risk reduction, crisis and disaster management, response, recovery, and solutions) and should amplify localized and gender-transformative responses, to allow people to stay, support displaced people or those on the move, and support people to move in an orderly fashion when necessary or preferred.

Main points raised during the discussion with participants:

USA
• Climate crisis reshaping the world—US working to address, including humanitarian response
• Noted evidence of link between environmental degradation and GBV
• Scarce resources, food insecurity, displacement, household dynamics lead to GBV
• Effects of climate change are not gender neutral
• Need to empower women and girls and gender diversity in climate fight; recalled US strategy on gender equality
• Cited White House report on impact on link between climate and migration

EU/ECHO
• EU concerned about climate displacement
• Severe impact on individuals and societies, leads to risk and erosion of communities
• Women disproportionately impacted; actions must be inclusive of women
• Recalled EU programs on women and children and their inclusion in climate programs
• Localization necessary in response to climate crisis and climate displacement
• EU will take over chairmanship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement
• Climate is complex and requires coordinated, comprehensive approach

FAO
• Impacts of climate threatening human security, displacement, and loss of livelihoods (especially agriculture)
• Recognize that migration can be a coping strategy, but the choice to move is not always available to women and girls
• In the face of impacts of climate change, women often forced to work harder to gather resources for families; girls often leave school
• Note impact on lives and livelihoods of indigenous, including pastoral and farmer—must include them in climate action
• Durable solutions to displacement require triple nexus approach

Outcomes of the side event:

The co-moderators formulated the following points in their closing remarks, including outcomes and next steps:
• It is imperative that, going forward, displacement is proactively and systematically integrated into national and local government policies, strategies and plans relevant to disaster risk reduction, climate change action, urban planning and development, across all phases of disaster and crises (prevention, preparedness, climate adaptation and risk reduction, crisis and disaster management, response, recovery, and solutions).
• Evidence-based and anticipatory approaches are also essential to reduce drivers and displacement risks and working towards sustainable solutions.
• Climate change adaptation and mitigation are equally important and time-sensitive; both are needed to ensure the protection of displaced communities and their hosts. Protecting the environment has clear protection dividends for communities. It also has an immediate positive impact on the environment around settlements.
• The negative effects of climate change on society, including forced displacement, are not inevitable: through appropriate measures and policies reducing disaster risks, promoting development, strengthening communities' resilience, and facilitating orderly migration out of areas at high risk as a strategy, coupled with effective climate change mitigation efforts, we can confront the challenge if action is taken immediately and accelerated.
• Funding for displacement-sensitive climate adaptation interventions is critical, yet only a small percentage of climate finance goes into adaptation. Climate adaptation financing is a priority and should be directed more to the countries most vulnerable to climate change, with amongst them many countries facing displacement and humanitarian emergencies.
• We need to recognize that gender inequality coupled with climate and environmental crises is one of the greatest challenges to achieving durable solutions to displacement and sustainable development. At the same time, women and girls need to be recognized as rights holders and active forces of change regarding climate action. It is crucial to continue elevating their voices and demands, as well as promote women's leadership in disaster prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience.
• We have a moral duty to be more ambitious on climate action and guarantee that it is gender-responsive and inclusive. At same time we should all recognize the essential role local actors play, they must be at the forefront of preventing, adapting to and responding to climate-related displacement.
• We should amplify localized and gender-transformative responses, to allow people to stay, support displaced people or those on the move, and support people to move in an orderly fashion when necessary or preferred.
• The fight against climate change is everyone's responsibility: public, private, and non-profit sectors, donors, scientists, women, youth, indigenous people, migrants, diaspora, displaced persons and affected communities—we all have a role to play and a voice to bring to respond to climate change and mitigate its adverse impacts on people.
• The organizers are committed to reinforcing their collaboration with all key stakeholders in developing solutions that leverage the potential of migration for climate change adaptation and risk reduction and enhance the contributions of displaced people, migrants and communities to climate action and resilience building.