Environment: Hot topic

Center of public debate and concern

Movement of People

Environment: Hot Topic

Oversight

- What of the 2-way association between migration and environmental change?

Migration → ← Environment

Misperception of Migration

- Often seen as an outcome of ineffective adaptation and mitigation strategies
- Rather than as an essential component to be managed

Crisis Prevention

- The sooner the discussion the better the response

Working definition

The Need for a Definition and the Controversies

Indirect or direct associations and intermediating factors?

Policy implications?

A Working Definition

*"**Environmental migrants** are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad".*

Purpose of Definition

Seeks to encompass population movement or displacement:

- Temporary or permanent; internal or cross-border
- Regardless of whether voluntary or involuntary
- Due to sudden or gradual environmental change

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Possible Scenarios

To help organize policy thinking and inter-agency coordination

Environmental Migration

A.   At less advanced stages of gradual environmental change

B.   At advanced stages of gradual environmental change

C.   Due to extreme environmental events

D.   Due to large-scale development and land conservation
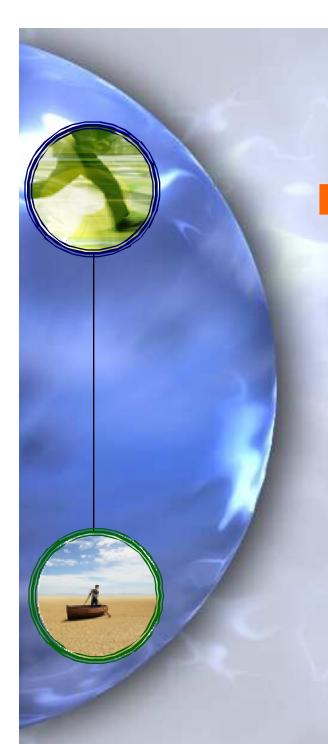
Impacts of Migration on the Environment:

E. In areas of destination

F. In areas of origin

Conflict Potential of Environmental Change and Migration:

G. Conflict potential

Scenarios are not mutually exclusive

How can

Environmental Change

Impact on

The Movement of People?

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Scenario A: Migration at less advanced stages of gradual environmental change

Onset of Environmental Degradation:

Increasing scarcity/fragility of natural resources

Declining household earning capacity and food security

Coping Strategy/Response:

Temporary/circular (internal/cross-border) labour migration from these areas for supplementary income/remittances

Obstacles:

Most vulnerable may not be able to migrate

Bilateral/regional labour agreements may not target environmentally-vulnerable areas

Worst-Case Outcome:

Limited labour mobility can accelerate environmental degradation

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Scenario B: Migration at advanced stages of gradual environmental change

Irreversible Environmental Degradation:

Total loss in household earning capacity

Area may become physically uninhabitable

Coping Strategy/Response:

Shift to (internal/cross-border) permanent migration as costs of return outweigh value of residual livelihood

Obstacles:

Limited options for incremental and comprehensive relocation/permanent migration

Worst-Case Outcome:

Mass spontaneous migration (including internal)

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Scenario C: Migration due to extreme environmental events

Natural or Industrial Disasters:

Potential for massive sudden damage, destruction and public health crises

Coping Strategy/Response:

Disaster prevention

Managed evacuation, shelter and assistance

Orderly return and reconstruction

Obstacles:

Limited capacities for disaster mitigation and response

Return may not be possible

Worst-Case Outcome:

Displacement can be large-scale, rapid and protracted

Unsustainable returns may lead to secondary displacement

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Scenario D: Migration due to large-scale development and land conservation

Development and Land Conservation Initiatives:

Clearing development and conservation sites

Changes in natural resource availability and quality

Efforts to settle nomadic populations

Coping Strategy/Response:

Managed relocation and integration

Obstacles:

Inadequate consultation of affected populations

Unsustainable changes in residence and employment

Worst-Case Outcome:

Potential for secondary movement or displacement

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Scenarios E: Migration's impact on the environment in areas of destination

E.1 Urbanization and Population Relocations:

Can lead to unregulated construction, unsustainable and unsanitary livelihood practices

Exacerbates deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, etc.

Coping Strategy/Response:

Environmentally-sound urban/rural planning to absorb migrants

Facilitate Integration

Obstacles:

Inadequate data on internal/cross-border migration

Mismatch: migrant needs vs. available services

Worst-Case Outcome:

Heightened vulnerability to mudslides, floods, public health risks

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Scenarios E: Migration's impact on the environment in areas of destination

E.2 Disaster-Induced Displacement:

Inappropriate emergency shelter/camp set-up, management and closure adversely affects the environment;

Displaced populations can mismanage resources

Coping Strategy/Response:

Mainstream environmental considerations into planning of emergency shelter/camps

Ensure potable water and other assistance

Obstacles:

Limited logistics and data

Worst-Case Outcome:

Initiation/acceleration of environmental degradation

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Scenarios F: Migration's impact on the environment in areas of origin

F.1 Migration at Less Advanced Stages of Environmental Degradation:

If temporary/circular, can alleviate demographic pressure and generate skills/funds for environmental protection

If permanent and large-scale, may remove minimum resources required to address environmental degradation

Coping Strategy/Response:

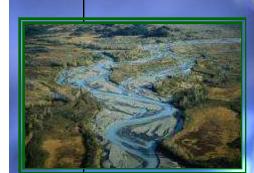Balance between needed temporary/circular labour mobility, sustainable development and "brain gain"

Obstacles:

Securing commitment for a balanced approach

Worst-Case Outcome:

Acceleration of environmental degradation

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Scenarios F: Migration's impact on the environment in areas of origin

F.2 Return Migration after Conflict or Disaster-Induced Displacement:

If orderly, can contribute to environmental protection

If spontaneous and unassisted, it can lead to mismanagement of resources

Coping Strategy/Response:

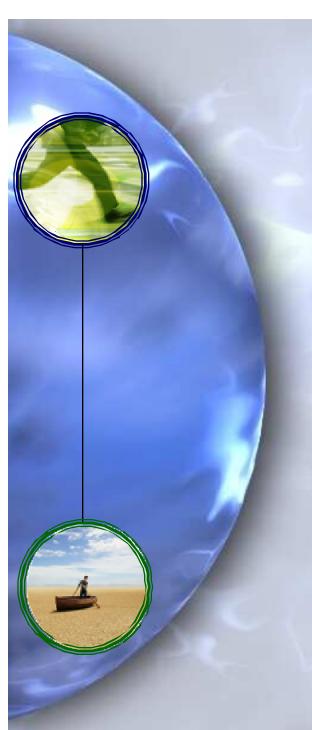Facilitated return, reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation

Obstacles:

Uncoordinated returns and recovery support

Worst-Case Outcome:

Acceleration of environmental degradation

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How can

Environmental Change and Migration

Impact on

And be Impacted by

Security?

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Scenarios G: Conflict potential of environmental change and migration

G.1 Environmentally-Induced Conflicts can Lead to Migration

Gradual or Sudden Environmental Change

| Tension over rising resource inequalities | Disputes over resource-use and property claims | Tension over responsibility and responses |

Migration

Coping Strategy/ Response

Integrating environmental considerations into conflict prevention, mediation and resolution

Scenarios G: Conflict potential of environmental change and migration

G.2 Unmanaged (Environmentally-Induced) Migration can Fuel Conflict

Unmanaged migration

Environmental damage

Property claim disputes

Strains on public resources and services

Tension

Coping Strategy/ Response

Integrating (environmental) migration considerations into conflict prevention, mediation and resolution

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Principles of Effective Environmental Migration Management

(i) Proactive policy and early action

To limit mass or forced migration

To support temporary/circular/permanent migration as coping strategies

To mitigate adverse environmental and human security impacts of unmanaged migration and return migration

(ii) Comprehensive and coherent policies

Integrating environmental considerations into migration policy/planning

Integrating migration considerations into environmental policy/planning

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Principles of Effective Environmental Migration Management

(iii) Cooperation

Inter-State cooperation at all levels Bilateral, Regional and Global

Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation: public and private sector actors, IOs and NGOs, trade unions, individual migrants, diaspora associations

Inter-Disciplinary Cooperation: migration, environment, disaster prevention, mitigation and response, urban and rural development, public health, conflict prevention, mediation and resolution

The Way Forward

Inter-Agency Cooperation

Working towards a more unified approach

Research, Data and Assessments

Improving the research agenda

Conducting environmental migration profiling
in conjunction with environmental impact assessments

Capacity-Building

Enhancing relevant capacity building for governments
and other relevant stakeholders

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The Way Forward

Strong Likelihood of Continued Environmental Degradation and Climate Change

Inevitability of Migration

Preparedness

Huge difference

1. At Government level:

- Resources

- Costs

- Efficiency of response

2. At community and individual level:

- Avoiding hardship, suffering, conflict

- Making a new start