

Population Mobility and Disaster Risk Reduction

Perspectives on human mobility and the HFA2 consultation process



IOM, human mobility and DRR

The present paper is part of IOM's commitment to the development of the post-2015 development agenda, and in particular of the successor framework to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Since 2007, IOM has worked to highlight the relevance of human mobility in disaster risk reduction policy and guidance, based on several decades of operational experience managing risks and building resilience all around the world.

IOM's activities are coordinated with the United Nations system by participating in the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience and in the High Level Committee on Programmes - Senior Management Group for Disaster Risk Reduction.

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Human mobility shaping risk and resilience

Today there are more than 1 billion migrants in the world.

More people are moving, and over longer distances, than ever before. These population flows modify the distribution of people and assets globally and locally, and are a key dynamic of hazard exposure, vulnerability and resilience.

With one person out of seven in the world on the move, recognizing the relationship between mobility, risk and resilience is a necessity for the success of the HFA2, and for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda as a whole.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



Planning for and managing present and future population flows through adequate provision of basic services and livelihood opportunities is key to preventing new risks and to creating resilient settlements.

Managing migration to prevent risk

Internal and cross-border movements can expose people to new hazards: migration flows often concentrate people in high risk areas, such as cyclone and flood-prone coastal zones and earthquake and landslide-prone urban fringes. Many of these areas of destination are hotspots of present and future environmental change (e.g. urban centres in low-elevation zones).

Migration is one of the main drivers of urbanization, especially in small and middle-sized cities in developing countries, where institutions can have limited capacities to cope with increased population pressures.

Population inflow, in particular when massive and sudden, can overwhelm the capacity of local markets and authorities to provide basic services and opportunities, resulting in reduced access to formal housing, health care, education and employment, and, as a consequence, in increased vulnerability for both newcomers and host communities.



Risk assessments, preparedness, emergency management and recovery that account for needs and capacities of migrants and displaced persons effectively reduce their vulnerability.

Including migrants in disaster risk management

Migrants, displaced and refugees often are among the worst affected in times of disasters.

Lack of local knowledge, including hazard awareness, reduced access to social networks, language and cultural barriers, and legal obstacles to accessing emergency and recovery assistance compound their vulnerability.



Preparing for, managing and sustainably ending displacement situations is key to reducing the indirect costs of disasters, and in particular their long-term impacts on the well-being of affected populations.

Addressing displacement to reduce disaster impacts

According to IDMC, more than 170 million people were displaced by hazards over the last five years only.

For many of them moving was life-saving, but displacement, especially when unmanaged, protracted or repeated, can translate into reduced personal security in cramped camps (including exposure to sexual and gender-based violence), tensions with host communities, reduced access to livelihood opportunities, and food insecurity.

Building resilience through migration

People move for the prospect of a safer, better life and, for most migrants and their families, migration results in positive outcomes. For vulnerable households, migration can be a measure of reducing pressures on local ecosystems, diversifying hazard exposure and strengthening livelihoods and resilience.

Data from the Gallup Survey for the 2013 World Migration Report show that migrants generally earn more and have better access to health, education and other public services than people staying behind. Migrants also facilitate the circulation of financial resources, expertise and know-how among home and host societies.

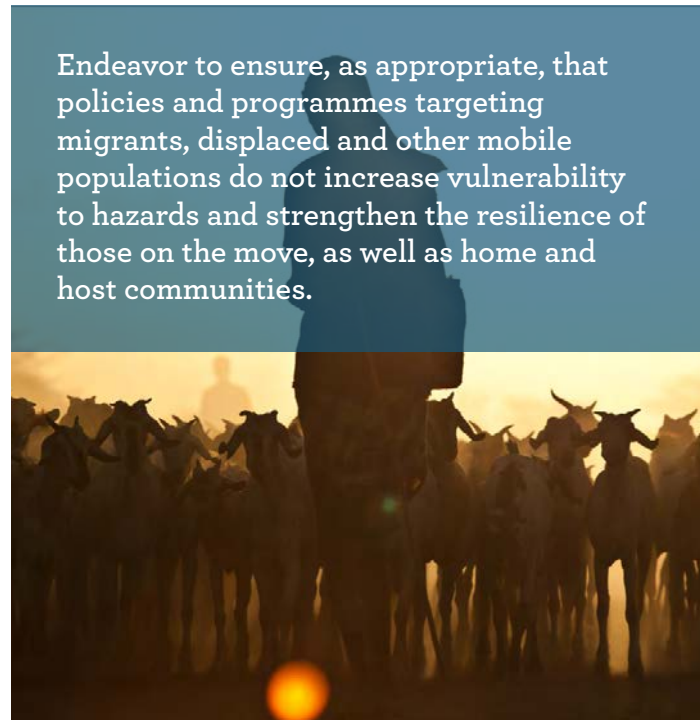
Economic remittances to households and communities of origin, in particular, can support basic consumption and food security, improve access to health and education, facilitate investment in safer housing and productive activities, or help recover after a disaster.



Better understanding and managing population flows in global, regional, national and local policies will help prevent the creation of new risks, reduce the impacts of hazards, expedite recovery after disasters and enhance the resilience of migrants, home and host communities.

Perspectives on migration and mobility in the current pre-zero draft text

- ▶ The references to displacement under **16.d** and **26.b** capture two aspects of disaster-induced displacement that are central to reducing the overall losses to natural hazards, namely the indirect and long-term impacts displacement can have on affected communities, and the potential for additional vulnerabilities and negative spill-overs linked with cross-border displacement.
- ▶ In the preamble, under **3**, a reference to “poorly managed migration” could be included among the underlying drivers of risk.
- ▶ The references to vulnerability and the inclusion of specific groups (touching, as well, on the issue of disaggregation of disaster data) under **12.d**, **14**, **17.a** and **23** could be extended to “migrants and displaced”, recognizing their differential vulnerability and capacities.
- ▶ Under **17.i** a reference could be added to “present and future population flows” among the factors that should be taken into account when formulating land use policies.
- ▶ The reference to displacement currently included under **17.d** could be expanded to include all population movements, as well as all transfers of material and immaterial resources linked with human mobility. A possible alternative formulation could read as follows:



Endeavor to ensure, as appropriate, that policies and programmes targeting migrants, displaced and other mobile populations do not increase vulnerability to hazards and strengthen the resilience of those on the move, as well as home and host communities.

Migration and displacement in previous HFA2 milestones

The **Chair's Summary of the Fourth Session of the Global Platform** called for “concrete measures to tackle risk drivers including (...) displacement and forced migration” (p.1), and indicated “sound urban development and spatial planning, including attention to informal settlements, migration” as a key disaster risk reduction measure at the local level (p.2).

The **Asia Pacific Regional Synthesis Report** identifies “the ability to address issues such as (...) migration” as one of the key measures for building the resilience of nations and communities to multiple shocks (p. 8). The **Input Document** for the HFA2 identifies large scale migration to cities as one of the underlying issues to be addressed in order to tackle unplanned settlements (p. 11).

The **Thematic Consultation on CCA and DRR in Central America** included undocumented migration among the main factors of social vulnerability in the region (p.5).

The **Communication from the European Commission** on the HFA2 recognizes that climate change might be a “threat multiplier for instability, conflict and state fragility, leading to migration and displacement” (p.4).

Migration and displacement in PrepCom 1 discussions

The Philippines: the participation of migrants in DRR actions and processes is essential in building resilience, but migrants are often among the most vulnerable individuals.

Nepal: the HFA2 should look at migration as a processes that can result in the creation of risk, but that can also have positive effects, in particular through resilience-building remittance transfers.

Bangladesh: the HFA2 should explicitly consider population displacement as a key factor of risk, and include explicit targets on prevention/management as a measure of risk reduction.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: DRR should be integrated into all efforts to address the major challenges countries are facing, including managing migration, displacement and relocations.

Norway: DRR actions have to tackle the vulnerabilities and needs of children, elderly, displaced persons, migrants, poor women, ethnic minorities, through targeted protection and assistance.

Cook Islands: Migrants are agents of change, whose exclusion from development policies and actions results in specific vulnerability.

Uganda: Governments should put in place plans to sustain the livelihoods of displaced persons and to end displacement.

The Economic Community of Central African States: forced migration, and in particular disaster-induced displacement, is one of the major factors leading to informality and risk in urban areas.

The **Science and Technology, Civil Society** and **Local Authorities** groups: migrants and displaced should be included among the most vulnerable and receive increased attention as agents of change.

Human mobility in parallel post-2015 policy dialogues

The Outcome Document of the Open Working Group on **Sustainable Development Goals** recognizes that data and statistics on sustainable development should be disaggregated, among other, by migration status. Target 10.7 reads “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” and includes a specific paragraph on reducing the cost of migrant remittances as a measure for development.

Under the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change**, two decisions refer to “climate induced migration, displacement and planned relocation” (Decision on adaptation 1.CP/16 par. 14 (f) and Decision on loss and damage 3.CP/18 par. 7 (a) (vi)). The potential of migration as an adaptation strategy will be further discussed at COP20 in Lima, as part of the Nairobi Work Programme framework.

The North and South-East Asia Regional Consultation for the **World Humanitarian Summit** recognizes migration as a cross-cutting issue with significant implications for humanitarian work (p.14).

The “Samoa Pathway”, the outcome document of the **Third UN Conference on SIDS**, recognizes the positive role that migrants and diaspora play in development, the value of remittances and the importance of planning for and responding to displacement.

The governments of the Philippines and the United States are co-leading the **Migrants in Countries in Crises** initiative, a process to address the specific vulnerabilities of migrants caught in acute crisis situations, including disasters.

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