

First session of the International Dialogue on Migration 2021
Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development:
migration, the environment and climate change (May 25 to 27, 2021)

IOM IDM - Panel 3: Examining the linkage between Migration, Environment and Climate Change and the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus (HDPN) May 26 10:30 to 12:00 EST = 22:30 to 00:00 PH

3. **Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary**, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons who will bring the IDPs, human rights and slow-onset dimensions into the discussion, including the insights of her last very important report on these topics presented at the General Assembly's 75th session in 2020 (https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/CallforInputs_IDPs_climate_change.aspx) - 7 minutes

TALKING POINTS

With very many thanks for the kind invitation of IOM to contribute to this First Dialogue on Migration and, specifically to this panel. So let me add to the spectrum of migration by raising an important and urgent issue, that is, forced displacement in the context of climate change.

Human mobility in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change can take many forms, including displacement, migration and planned relocation. In most cases, movement is not entirely voluntary or forced, but rather falls somewhere on a continuum between the two, with different degrees of voluntariness and constraint. In line with the definition of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internal displacement is considered to take place when people are evacuated or flee their homes or places of habitual residence, whether to avoid the anticipated effects of a disaster, or in the aftermath of a disaster, and remain within the country's borders. In this context, I have been asked to share in this Dialogue my last report to the General Assembly which was focused on the particular challenges posed by internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change, and its impacts on the enjoyment of the human rights of those affected. As defined by the UN FCCC, slow-onset events are "events that evolve gradually from incremental changes occurring over many years or from an increased frequency or intensity of recurring events" (FCCC/TP/2012/7, para. 20)

It is very telling while very little attention has been brought to the human rights challenges resulting from certain types of slow-onset disaster displacement, as most of the attention has been focused on sudden-onset disaster displacement, the human rights implications are both ongoing – current, going on now - and generational, in all types of disaster displacement, with much of the effects irreversible. Given this context, we have analysed that practically all human rights of displaced, as well as non-displaced persons, are affected and the risk of violations to these human rights increase with both time, intensity and frequency of the effects of climate change. Nevertheless, between displaced and the

non-displaced populations, the differences of the levels of risks and actual violations of human rights grow wider and graver over time, with displaced populations having most of the burden. In addition, within the vast populations of internally displaced persons affected, we likewise need to examine and address the particularities of the impacts of climate change on the human rights of specific groups, such as indigenous peoples and pastoralists, women, children and young persons, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

It is particularly in relation not only to internally displaced persons generally but to specific groups that the aspect of loss and damages comes in very succinctly. Much of the loss in IDP situations are not actually considered “loss and damage” – talk about, for example, the loss of culture and language caused by displacement, the loss of traditional livelihoods brought about by damages to land and waters as experienced by persons with special attachments to the land, and to loss of ways of life and the knowledge inherent. This year, it would be incumbent for the UNFCCC and us to reflect on so-called unseen “loss and damages” that is the result of the averse effects of climate change brought about by forced displacement.

Having said this, however, the only way forward is to ensure that such groups, instead of merely being seen as “vulnerable”, a prevalent view in many of our circles, are seen as agents of positive change and agency; it is therefore incumbent on us to facilitate in our respective areas of responsibilities the conditions that would enable what I call “the agency approach”. Indeed, in this vein, my mandate has always emphasized that the participation of IDPs in decisions affecting them is essential and is a matter of good governance on the part of the authorities – and an essential to protect IDP rights.

My report concludes by reiterating the primary responsibility of States to prevent and reduce the risks attributed to such effects of climate change, with the fundamental need of adopting a human rights and IDP-centered approach and response to prevention, protection and solutions. Parallel to this spotlight on State obligations, I stress the importance of a coordinated and consolidated solidarity and action-oriented approach of the international community to tackle this present situation.

In sum, addressing internal displacement in the context of slow-onset adverse effects of climate change requires a holistic approach to the complexities and multi-causality of human mobility in such context. It therefore requires both individual and joint action by affected States and the international community, with the IDPs and affected communities themselves, as well as a multi-stakeholder coordinated approach to climate action – disaster risk reduction, development and human rights protection. Inclusion of IDP and specific groups within the displaced populations as agents of change. And of course, underlying this process, is to adopt a HR-based approach.

It would also be essential to involve peace actors in settings where such climate change-related effects interact with armed conflict. On the ground, the approach requires other actors: business, civil society, national human rights institutions and other independent

actors, and academia. Last, but certainly not the least, the participation of internally displaced persons, as required by the human right of political participation and reiterated by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, is essential in all endeavours.

In addition to my mandate's expert and independent report to the General Assembly, and its recommendations, being taken on board by the international community and the States concerned, I also very much hope that the High Level Panel will take a consolidated approach of disaster risk reduction, development and human rights protection – without which solutions to situations of internal displacement caused by effects of climate change cannot be achieved.

I conclude by thanking IOM for its valuable contribution to my GA report last year, which inputs much enhanced the perspectives and substance of the analysis, as well as appreciation for our collaboration on climate change and internal displacement issues. And not least, thank you to IOM invitation for me to join this panel - I look forward to the discussions.