

Second session of the International Dialogue on Migration 2022

Overlapping global crises: the impacts of food insecurity and climate change on migration and displacement

24-25 October 2022

DG Opening Remarks

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all at this second session of the International Dialogue on Migration in 2022. While meeting in person is – for now – a possibility here in Geneva, we are taking advantage of the hybrid format to ensure this discussion has a broad reach. I welcome those who are joining us remotely, including many of our high-level speakers, and appreciate, in particular, those who are joining us at a very late or early hour.

The International Dialogue on Migration is a critical platform to reflect upon and debate key migration issues, and particularly those most pressing for our work.

Climate change and migration are defining issues for our time. There is now overwhelming evidence that climate change and disasters are shaping migration patterns in all parts of the world.

In 2021, **disasters alone led to 23.7 million internal displacements**, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Indeed, the IDMC are discussing these numbers just next door, supporting our policy discussions today. These estimates are expected to increase if no climate action is taken. Looking ahead, the **World Bank has projected that 216 million people could become internal climate migrants by 2050**, with no region is safe from the impacts of climate change.

While this data is new, the evidence is not. We have known for more than 30 years – since the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in 1990 – that climate change is a risk multiplier capable of rapidly reshaping patterns of human mobility. The latest IPCC Sixth Assessment Report – published earlier this year – has unequivocally concluded that it is, today, having profound impacts on human mobility.

Our deteriorating environment alone should be cause for immediate action. But what has become very evident this year is the **dominance of acute, multidimensional crises. Crises borne from a reality where ongoing climate impacts have combined with the lingering effects of pandemic, economic instability, rising food prices, and the global reverberations of conflict in Europe.**

These factors have created unprecedented levels of food insecurity in much of the world. In such a context, it would be naïve to think people will not move. And indeed, in the Progress Declaration of the first International Migration Review Forum – adopted by consensus in May – Member States expressed the same concern.

According to the World Food Programme (*Global Report on Food Crisis 2022, mid-year update*), at least **205 million people are expected to face acute food insecurity and be in need of urgent assistance in 45 countries**. Sub Saharan Africa remains one of the most vulnerable regions to the impact of climate change and a region predicted to have the greatest number of internal climate migrants by 2050: 86 million.

Countries of greatest concern include:

- **Somalia**, where prolonged drought is combining with high food prices and continued conflict.
- **Afghanistan**, where famine looms following a combination of catastrophic floods and the worst drought for decades.
- And countries that have now been added to the list of countries of concern: **Guatemala** and **Honduras**, with too much rainfall, and **Malawi**, with too little.

Increasing food insecurity presents itself not only as a mobility driver – a phenomenon we have seen before – but also a manifestation of how climate change impacts productive ecosystems. The IPCC has noted that, **by 2050, up to 10% of current food production areas may become climatically unsuitable**. Rural populations, landlocked or import dependent countries, fragile and conflict affected contexts and humanitarian operations will suffer the blunt of commodity scarcity and price increase.

Your excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies, and gentlemen, **we do not have much time left to act**. We are already experiencing irreversible loss and damage and we are threatening the future of an entire young generation, on their lives, and livelihoods.

The overlapping crises we are witnessing around the world are **undermining our ability to meet the promise of Agenda 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals**. It is our responsibility to prepare for climate extremes; it is our responsibility to mitigate climate impacts on lives and livelihoods and consider the role that human mobility plays in this regard.

Some regions of the world are already taking on this responsibility, and IOM is supporting these efforts:

- In the East and Horn of Africa – a region deeply impacted by food insecurity and vulnerable to climate change – governments have come together to galvanize global support to address the harsh impact of climate change on human mobility through the **Kampala Ministerial Declaration**, signed in July.
- And I have just returned from the **Pan-African Forum on Migration**, where ministers from across the continent have gathered to assess how to build more resilient communities through adaptation strategies.
- The **South American Conference on Migration** has made a call for COP27 to consider both the challenges and to promote good practices to avert, minimize and address displacement related climate change.
- And the **Pacific region** is in the process of developing a **Regional Framework on Climate Mobility**, to guide governments in addressing displacement, migration, evacuations, and planned relocation.

Our Dialogue today is timely as we are a few weeks now from the **next iteration of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled to take place next month in Sharm El-Sheikh**. And it is an opportunity to unpack the various aspects of food insecurity, climate change and migration, understanding the scale of the problem, as well as finding solutions. Over the next two days:

- We will look at the **specific impacts of climate on our oceans, water, and land**. While the food insecurity challenges of today are compounded with economic recession and high food prices, the challenges of tomorrow will centre upon our ability to produce food.
- We will assess the **impacts for specific populations: women**, who often bear the brunt of food insecurity but also hold the key to solutions; **and young people**, who will be forced to take up the legacy we leave behind.

- We will identify **means for communities to adapt to changing livelihood options through skills development and new, green economy opportunities**, including through partnership with the private sector, and the role of diaspora communities.
- We will discuss the **possibilities for legal pathways** to expand routes out of humanitarian and development crises for those with the fewest choices.
- We will **hear from migrants who have been affected by climate change** but have used their knowledge and experience both to inform our responses and help others.
- We will **learn from the global COVID-19 experience**, both in terms of its impacts on food insecurity, but our efforts to build a climate-smart food system.
- And **we will look towards COP27**, to understand how we can bring these issues to the table, in Egypt, and in future rounds.

The climate crisis we are facing today is a social crisis. Poverty, inequality, and marginalization are the major determinants of individual vulnerability to current and future hazards. As we experience more intense and frequent climate events, it will be our capacity to address the social, political, and economic factors that engender risk that will determine the success and resilience of communities, both this and the next generation.

IOM's vision and commitment is to promote a **comprehensive approach to migration, environment, and climate change**. It is **grounded in human rights, for the benefit of both migrants and societies**. When well managed migration becomes a safe and accessible choice, it can help people adapt to environmental and climate change pressures.

My hope is that at the end of this International Dialogue, we will have identified practices, lessons learnt and recommendations that will support the development and implementation of concrete actions for the benefit of both states and migrants in this context. The **outcomes of these two days will feed into our contributions to the upcoming COP27, as well as the next IOM Council meeting on the 29th November**, where we have invited Member States to participate at the highest political level in a discussion on these same issues.

I look forward to fruitful deliberations. I am convinced that only together can we overcome the overlapping crises the world is facing today.