



Displaced by a changing climate

Caritas Voices:
protecting and supporting
people on the move



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This report covers experiences of National Caritas Organizations from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, Oceania and North America.

Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of 162 members who are working at the grassroots in almost every country of the world. Inspired by Catholic faith, Caritas is the helping hand of the Church – reaching out to the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race or religion, to build a world based on justice and fraternal love.

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Foreword

As our Common Home continues to warm, its climate is becoming increasingly unstable. Many places are becoming uninhabitable, especially in the poorest of countries. As a result, millions of women and men find it more and more challenging to provide a safe, dignified and fulfilling life for their families and households. Often they end up leaving their homes and find themselves in very precarious situations. Many of their human rights are violated. They are left to shoulder alone the negative impacts of an economic model they do not benefit from.

It is time for State leaders to step up to their common, but differentiated, responsibilities and take action to uphold the common good. Heavy emitters must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and provide support for those who need to locally adapt to the consequences of climate change, so that the decision to stay or to move can remain truly free.

Where such efforts are failing, and people are left with no choice but to move, or decide to move preemptively, governments have the obligation to ensure they can do so safely and with dignity. They must protect and support them in their journey, offering the best possible conditions and opportunities to move before it is too late. This requires inclusive planning processes, scaling up funding in the form of grants, ensuring policy and legal frameworks are implemented and leave no gaps, and addressing the economic and non-economic losses and damages endured.

In the words of Pope Francis, 'as we work to ensure that in every case migration is the fruit of a free decision, we are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for a safe and regular migration. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone.'¹

Around the world, along with local Catholic parishes,² national Caritas Member Organisations are at the side of persons displaced due to climate change. This document seeks to give voice to the predicament of the people they serve. May it inspire governments, organisations, and individuals to work together to fill the existing gaps in their protection and support.

Let us strive for a more fraternal world.



Alistair Dutton, Secretary General,
Caritas Internationalis

¹ Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2023 <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/20230511-world-migrants-day-2023.html>

² Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/03/30/210330b.html>



Executive summary

Based on the experiences of national Caritas Member Organisations, this report takes stock of the hardships faced by persons displaced within and across country borders due to climate change. It seeks to contribute to the global debate on how to address existing planning, finance, legal and policy protection gaps to prevent such human rights violations and associated losses and damages from occurring.

The growing reality of suffering

The evidence no longer leaves room for doubt: climate change has become a major driver of displacement. Testimonies from national Caritas Members describe how people on the move due to climate change are left to bear the weight of multiple violations of their human rights - economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political - and associated losses and damages. While leaving is in itself traumatic, displaced people face situations of high precariousness, disintegration of their households, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, conflict, violence and successive moves. Adding to their hardships, they are often forcibly returned to the place they initially had to flee and are left with no other option but to move again.

We know that, unless state leaders take bold actions to mitigate the global warming of the Earth and increase resilience, many more people will have to move from their usual place of residence. Therefore, it is necessary to address the present suffering and plan ahead to lessen the high human, social, economic and political costs caused by haphazard displacement.

Address present human rights violations and plan ahead

While many efforts, including Caritas', seek to welcome, protect, promote and integrate persons displaced due to climate change, they are simply not in proportion with the magnitude of the situation. Governments need to plan ahead, and make the necessary adjustments to be able to provide for the wide range of service infrastructure needs generated by displacement due to climate change in all situations and at all stages, including for those returning, left behind and belonging to vulnerable groups. Such planning must be done together with the affected communities, including the hosts, and informed by improved data collection. The Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and other planning instruments should be put to use to protect and support people affected by displacement due to climate change and empower them to transition from being recipients to actively making



Vastly increase funding to ensure migration with dignity

positive contributions to their host community.

Great investments are, therefore, required in countries which do not have the means to deal with displacement due to climate change, a problem they did not cause. Most movements take place in lower and middle income countries, many of which are highly indebted and have difficulty servicing their debt. Donors have consistently been falling short of their climate finance commitments, most of which is in the form of loans. Adaptation finance is vastly insufficient, and rarely addresses migration. Funds are also urgently needed to address losses and damages inflicted by migration due to climate change. Until a Loss and Damage fund becomes operational, existing grant mechanisms should be used and debt relief and swaps considered, while increasing accountability to ensure that the funding actually makes it to where it is most needed.

Leave no one behind: apply policy and legal frameworks

States pledged to leave no one behind when they endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognises the need to address displacement due to climate change. Yet evidence from national Caritas Members on the ground shows that people on the move due to climate change are mostly left without legal and policy frameworks to protect and support them.

Policy and legal frameworks for internal displacement

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement address the protection needs of all persons displaced internally, which constitute the majority of migrants. They inspired the development of several regional protection frameworks, some of which are binding, and numerous states have incorporated the principles in their national laws. However, these frameworks mostly remain to be implemented due to a lack of political will. A number of processes to support their adoption and implementation exist and should continue to be promoted. Nevertheless, it should be noted that under human rights law and international humanitarian law, States do have the responsibility to protect individuals and communities under their jurisdiction.

Policy and legal frameworks for cross border displacement

Where people suffer during and after the crossing of international borders due to climate change, this is mostly due to the lack of effective legal and policy frameworks for admission and stay. The Convention on the Status of Refugees cannot be used to grant asylum to persons displaced due to climate change because of its restrictive “refugee” definition, hence the idea of developing an optional protocol, as proposed by the Special Rapporteur on Climate Change.

Further, while the Global Compact for Migration explicitly recognises climate change as a driver of migration, few states even mention climate change in their reports on adoption progress of this non-binding document.

Short of global, legally binding and comprehensive instruments to protect and support persons who move across borders due to climate change, regional, sub-regional, bilateral and other agreements and instruments can offer some urgently needed protection and support in the meantime. Existing regional instruments with broad definitions of the term “refugee” could grant asylum to persons having fled the impacts of climate change. Other regions could follow this path. States can also be held responsible for violating international law principles, in particular for that of non-refoulement. Finally, with some adaptations, a number of complementary pathways can also help patch the protection gap - such as free movement agreements between given states, temporary work permits, the Temporary Protection Status, humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors, family reunification and community sponsorship programmes.

While obtaining protection for persons crossing borders due to climate change represents a serious challenge, international and regional courts have been requested to give Advisory Opinions, including on the legal obligations of States with respect to displacement due to climate change. The responses could help to strengthen the case for an improved legal and policy framework.

The cost of inaction: losses and damages

If governments were to plan, invest and provide legal and policy frameworks - individually and collectively - to support people to move freely in anticipation of, or in response to, adverse impacts of climate change and to fully integrate into host communities which have been prepared to welcome them, whether within borders or in neighbouring countries, then many human rights violations and associated high losses and damages could be avoided. Nevertheless, even under the best case scenario, some economic and non-economic losses and damages are unavoidable. They must be addressed as best possible through financial and non-financial restorative actions. The fact that some losses and damages cannot be avoided also highlights a situation where persons bear the dire consequences of a situation they did not cause and therefore the great responsibility of State leaders to face reality and take climate action.

This report outlines the risks of inaction on displacement, and points to possible solutions to mitigate needless human suffering, human rights violations and unchecked losses and damages resulting from a destabilised climate.

Recommendations

A growing number of people are displaced by the increasingly negative impacts of climate change. Unsupported and unprotected, they are presently subjected to immense suffering, human rights violations and associated losses and damages at all stages of displacement as witnessed by Caritas Members on the ground. Most of this displacement occurs in poor and debt vulnerable countries which are left to bear the consequences of a problem their populations did not cause. Therefore, we recommend:

To address present human rights violations and plan ahead

States should:

- adapt and increase social and physical infrastructure capacity to holistically address present and future needs generated by displacement due to climate change.
- actively involve communities on the move and those hosting in planning and implementing durable solutions. States must address the needs of both parties to avoid conflict, and value traditional approaches.
- improve data collection and analysis on displacement due to climate change.
- make full use of existing planning instruments which are presently underutilised - NDCs, NAPs and DRR strategies - and address displacement due to climate change in all national and local planning processes, with a whole-of-government approach, so as to enable positive development outcomes.

To scale up funding to ensure migration with dignity

Donors should:

- increase the level of funding in the form of grants - not of loans - dedicated to climate change adaptation, including migration as an adaptation response.
- urgently work on making the Loss and Damage fund promised at COP27 operational. Ensure its scope is broad enough to cover all losses and damages associated with migration due to climate change and that the human rights concept is central to its design and implementation.
- until the Loss and Damage fund is operational, drastically increase funding through existing channels and consider debt relief and debt swaps to address losses and damages associated with migration due to climate change.
- ensure civil society - including indigenous peoples and local communities - has a say in deciding how funds are to be



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↑ Caritas providing food and WASH services to more than 930,000 refugees that arrived in Greece.

To leave no one behind: develop and apply policy and legal frameworks

used and are given the possibility to access funds directly, as well as to monitor whether they are spent according to plan.

On internal displacement

- **States should** incorporate and enforce the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in all relevant national legislation and policy frameworks.
- **The international community should** remind States of their primary duty to protect the human rights of all persons in their jurisdiction, including persons displaced due to climate change, and, when necessary, enhance the capacity of States to protect.

On cross-border displacement

States should:

- apply the 1951 Geneva Convention to situations where climate change and conflict coexist.
- fully adopt the recommendations in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in their legal and policy frameworks.
- grant asylum to persons displaced by the impacts of climate change where regional agreements give a broad enough definition to the concept of refugee status.
- adapt, improve and make full use of existing complementary pathways for admission to lessen the protection gap for people on the move due to climate change, where no better options are presently available.

The international community should:

- encourage more regions to adopt refugee definitions which encompass climate change impacts as valid reasons for seeking asylum.
- encourage States to meet their commitments to international law as regards people on the move due to climate change, including by applying the principle of non-refoulement.

States must accept the reality that migration has become an adaptation response to climate change. They must take the necessary steps to enable and support proactive migration that is safe, regular and orderly to minimise losses and damages and associated human rights violations, as well as ensure reparation for losses and damages when they could not be avoided.



↑ Middle of Ethiopia's Rift Valley in Oromia where herders move long distances to search for water.

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Introduction: beyond numbers

‘The decision to migrate should always be free,’ as Pope Francis reminds us in his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2023.¹ Yet the impacts of climate change increasingly force the decision to move on people who benefit little from the economic model causing these very changes in our common climate.²

While “migration” refers to population movements in general,³ the term “displacement” best describes the necessity for people to move in response to climate change.⁴ Indeed, moving due to climate change is escaping its effects.⁵ It is a coping mechanism, when mitigation and other adaptation measures are failing. One can call it an “adaptation response”, where the word response reminds us this form of adaptation is being imposed.

Caritas Internationalis recognises that while people are being forced to move, everything should be done to protect their dignity. No one should have to wait to move until it becomes a matter of life or death. Rather, one must allow the decision to move to be taken with as many elements of choice as possible. People should be able to anticipate further impacts of climate change on their place of usual residence, be offered opportunities to lead a fulfilling life elsewhere, and be protected and supported while in transit, if and when they decide to move.

¹ <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/20230511-world-migrants-day-2023.html>

² See concept of “ecological debt” discussed by Pope Francis in paragraph 51 of his encyclical “Laudato Si” https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.pdf

³ See the TERMINOLOGY section for definitions → pg.83

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5334-providing-legal-options-protect-human-rights-persons-displaced>

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5334-providing-legal-options-protect-human-rights-persons-displaced>

1.1 The (too few) numbers

The evidence no longer leaves room for doubt: climate change has become a major driver of displacement.⁶ Droughts, tropical storms and hurricanes, heavy rains and floods are the most common causes for persons having to leave their homes and land due to this phenomenon. They move not only to adapt to the direct impacts of increasingly extreme and unpredictable weather events, but also in response to the erosion the changing climate is causing to their livelihoods. This displacement seems to occur mostly within the national boundaries of climate vulnerable countries, mainly lower and middle income countries.^{7,8}

Estimates indicate that, on average over the last decade, over 20 million people have been displaced within the borders of their countries every year due to extreme weather events alone. This is over twice the average number of people who have been internally displaced every year due to conflict.⁹ Children too are affected by extreme weather events: in 2020, such phenomena forced nearly 10 million children to leave their usual place of residence.¹⁰

While the impact of such events is highly visible, and therefore easier to measure, these represent only part of the picture. Climate change is also progressively degrading environments in which people live and earn a living. Due to a lack of reliable data, beyond anecdotal case studies, we are presently unable to produce global estimates of just how many people presently end up having to leave their usual place of residence to adapt to slow-onset events. Nevertheless, considering approximately '3.3 billion people presently live in countries with high human vulnerability to climate change',¹¹ the number of people in this situation may actually be quite high.¹²

With the Earth's temperature rise unchecked and population in at-risk areas increasing, particularly in lower income countries, migration due to climate change is likely to continue growing.¹³ A World Bank report concluded that, in six regions alone, by 2050, without ambitious climate action, well over 200 million people may need to move within the borders of their countries, to cope with the impacts of slow-onset climate events.¹⁴

⁶ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf

⁷ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg2/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf

⁸ <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>

⁹ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg2/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UNICEFUK_FuturesAtRisk_... Displacement_Report.pdf

¹¹ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg2/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf

¹² https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg2/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf

¹³ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter04.pdf

¹⁴ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248>

1.2 The Caritas testimonies

As a Confederation of 162 Member Organisations at the side of the most vulnerable people in almost every country in the world, along with local Catholic parishes, Caritas is well placed to bear witness to how these statistics translate on the ground and to propose solutions to the human rights implications of climate change. **Based on the experience of our members, the objective of this report is to contribute to the global debate on how to address the planning, finance, legal and policy gaps in the protection of human rights of persons displaced within and across country borders due to adverse effects of climate change.** While recognising the strong links between environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change, as well as the key roles of mitigation and *in situ* adaptation, the study focuses closely on the little addressed issue of climate change and the predicament of people once they are displaced.

This report is based on testimonies from Caritas Member Organisations, complemented with a review of the literature and informal exchanges with relevant actors in the field of policy. The testimonies were collected across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Oceania in over 20 countries in some of the areas most impacted by climate change.¹⁵

The document first describes how individuals and communities are presently affected by migration due to climate change, including those on the move, their hosts and those left behind, as well as the many challenges they face before moving, in transit, at destination and in the event they return to their point of departure. The study then explores the planning, finance and legal and policy frameworks needed to address the human rights violations and associated losses and damages experienced. It highlights their potential to minimise the latter and turn migration into a less traumatic adaptation response mechanism, potentially leading to positive development outcomes.

¹⁵ See section on [METHODOLOGY](#) → pg.87

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The growing reality of suffering

In their testimonies, Caritas Members report observing that **displacement due to the impacts of climate change is a growing reality of human rights violations and losses and damages.**

2.1 Displacement due to sudden-onset events

Caritas has been providing humanitarian aid for many years and is assisting growing numbers of people forced to move due to sudden onset events, as described in Colombia. The dramatic impacts of extreme weather events and ensuing displacement have been described in **Oceania (BOX 1)**, Mozambique (**BOX 5**), and in Kenya. In these cases displacement can be temporary or permanent, but in the event people do return, their home and source of livelihood will have suffered severe damages, and lost value. People are pushed further into poverty and become more vulnerable to any subsequent events that might happen. They become more likely to eventually move definitively.¹

2.2 Displacement due to slow-onset events

In some places, the environment is gradually becoming uninhabitable. For example, Caritas **Oceania** describes how sources of drinking water decline and coastal land is lost to erosion (**BOX 1**). At the same time, the productivity of people's sources of livelihood may be decreasing. For example, Caritas Honduras describes how farmers experience more crop failures as seasons become more unpredictable.

In these cases, the impacts of climate change act as additional stressors where there is an existing context of "push" factors - such as poor access to education and health services, corruption or low incomes - and "pull" factors - such as employment opportunities (**FIGURE 1**). The effects of climate change exacerbate the other issues and people reach a tipping point at which they decide they must leave, either temporarily or permanently.

The stage at which this point is reached depends on where the individual person or community finds itself on the scale between vulnerability and resilience. It may also depend on the need to react, in which case it qualifies as reactive migration. The decision may also be taken to anticipate an untenable situation where the place of usual residence becomes completely uninhabitable, through proactive migration, as is happening in Oceania (**BOX 1**).

¹ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TFD%20Output%20activity%20I.2.pdf>

1 – Oceania

Authors: Sophie Jenkins and Connor McBride, Caritas Oceania

» Having to move: the growing crisis

The Oceania region is at the frontline of the climate crisis. Because of climate change, the ocean which has, for so long, been a source of fulfilment and nourishment for coastal populations is now threatening their lives and livelihoods.

“ We are connected and united by the sea. Our Ocean is our life, and water is vital to our life and livelihoods. But it is getting confusing due to the impacts of climate change. The weather is getting more extreme. We are having longer and more intense droughts, more intense and powerful cyclones, and heavier and longer rainfall. Saltwater is seeping into our fresh water sources for drinking and growing plants. ”

AMELIA MA'AFU
Former Director, Caritas Tonga

While Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Pacific Region contribute minimally to global carbon emissions, they are feeling the effects of climate change disproportionately. The effectiveness of traditional land management, disaster management and adaptation practices are threatened by the impacts of climate change.

With a largely coastal population, the Oceania region is highly vulnerable to displacement due to climate change. We know that, since 2010, worsening conditions have led to one in ten people from the low-lying small island nations of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu to migrate internally or externally.¹ Nevertheless, a key challenge in Oceania, particularly in Small Island Developing States, still is a lack of accurate data collection and analysis related to internal displacement patterns.

“ Caritas visited the coastal village of Nawi on the Fiji island of Vanua Levi. It met 63-year-old Atanasio Niukala who has lived in Nawi all his life. He is concerned over the gradual erosion of the shoreline by storm surges and ongoing sea level rise. Sitting under a 300-year-old tree that locals say has been there since the village was founded, Atanasio lamented the loss of trees which are falling as coastal erosion undercuts them. The community is considering the expensive options of building concrete sea walls or rock gabions. In the meantime, a process of relocating some dwellings further inland has already begun, in anticipation of the sea gaining ground in the long term. ”

¹ <https://www.nzaia.org.nz/ghoshandorchiston.html>



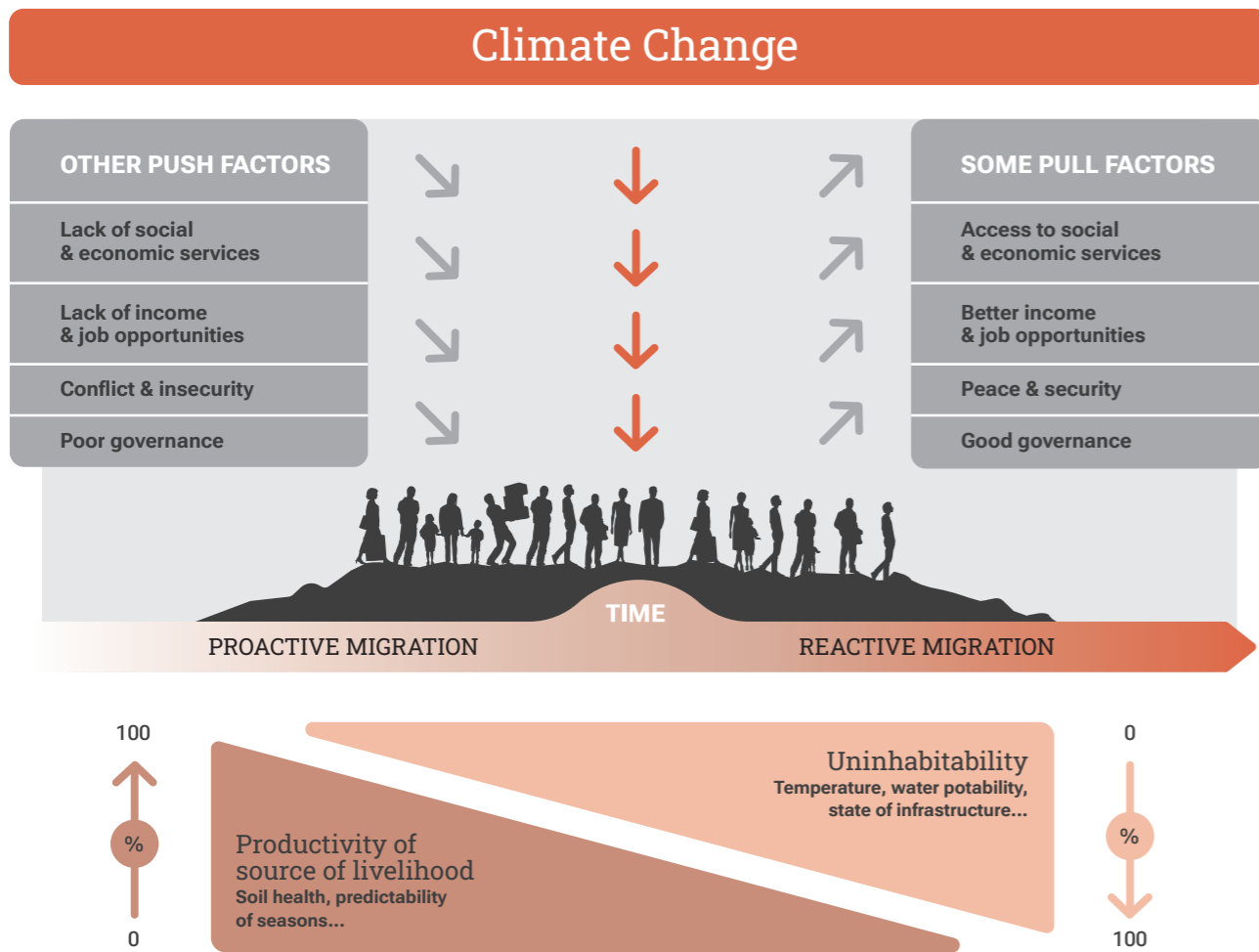


FIGURE 1 / Slow-onset events and agency

The earlier a person migrates, or plans to migrate, the more agency they have: the more they tend to have choices and feel empowered to make them.²

2.3 Mostly rural-rural or rural-urban and within borders

Almost all of the situations described by Caritas Member Organisations concern the displacement of population which originates in rural areas and has for destination either other rural areas or urban areas within the same country, in line with the conclusion made by the IPCC in its latest report.³ Indeed, populations whose way of life is directly based on activities that are highly dependent on the health of ecosystems and availability of natural resources are very sensitive to an increasingly unpredictable and extreme climate. As a result they are most likely to suffer from food and water insecurity and declining incomes. Such populations are typically represented in high proportions in most countries vulnerable to climate change.

² <https://publications.iom.int/books/internal-displacement-context-slow-onset-adverse-effects-climate-change>
³ www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter07.pdf

Some pastoralist peoples who have traditionally adjusted their lives to seasons alternating between dry and wet periods through predictable circular or pendular movements are finding themselves unable to cope and end up settling in urban areas, as witnessed by Caritas in Somalia. Sedentary populations, such as the farming communities described by Caritas India, also end up moving when they face persistent drought. In the Sahel, Caritas finds that herders and farmers compete over land when the former migrate to areas where arable land is already limited. In Senegal, the local Caritas describes cases of displacement linked with the need of rural people to find alternative sources of income due to climate change. Groundnut producers have had to move their activities to a new region due to drought and fisherfolk sail further afield as fish stocks shift away from warming waters.

Most people on the move due to climate change probably end up in cities. Urban areas tend to be highly affected by attracting new settlers in general: overall, UNHCR reports 60% of refugees and 80% of internally displaced people live in cities.⁴ In a country severely affected by the impacts of climate change, urban areas can be overwhelmed by an influx of people from the rural areas as in **Mozambique** (BOX 5).

Urban dwellers will also end up being affected, as the price of food rises for example when yields decline in rural areas, temperatures rise, and water scarcity sets in.⁵ Poor management of rapidly growing urban areas puts people at risk of disaster displacement, as reported by Caritas Colombia, where flooding and landslides displace people living in informal settlements every year.⁶ In addition, due to rapid urban growth in coastal zones which are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, erosion and other hazards, many people may have to move. Unfortunately, due to a lack of studies on displacement from urban areas due to climate change, little is known about the phenomenon.⁷

Of special note too is the fact that climate change also forces migration, whether rural or urban, in an indirect manner. Indeed, for example, through damages to infrastructure many sectors of the economy can be affected and this has a negative impact on jobs, and likewise, climate change impacts on the economy may decrease governments revenues and make offering services more difficult. Fewer jobs and services will push people to move.

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2020/10/5f9c01704/world-cities-day-cities-lead-way-protecting-forcibly-displaced-against.html>
⁵ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/outreach/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FactSheet_HumanSettlements.pdf
⁶ <https://gar.undrr.org/part-ii-implementation-sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-and-disaster-risk-informed.html>
⁷ www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter07.pdf

2.4 Cross-border displacement on the rise

Even if most of displacement due to climate change is still most likely internal, Caritas bears witness to the experience that displacement across international borders is increasing,⁸ with people moving to adjacent countries. People often move in a stepping stone pattern in response to environmental degradation induced by climate change. It may start as a temporary process whereby people seek work on a nearby farm or town and then perhaps look for work in a region or town further away, possibly on a more permanent basis. Some, in a further step, will go abroad, often after having accumulated enough resources for the journey, for example through work in urban centres. The number of those who end up doing so seems to be on the rise as observed in **Guatemala (BOX 3)** and **Bangladesh (BOX 6)**. According to the local Caritas, many people in the south of the African continent flee to South Africa in response to the increasing challenges caused by climate change. Meanwhile, in the Horn of Africa, **Djibouti (BOX 8)** serves as a transit area for those trying to reach the Gulf states due to climate change, sharing the journey with people on the move due to other causes.

2.5 When climate change and conflict combine

In some areas people are affected both by conflict and environmental degradation due to climate change. These factors are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, while other drivers seem to dominate statistically,⁹ climate change can contribute to conflict which in turn triggers displacement while, at the same time, conflict can further exacerbate the vulnerability of populations to climate change and lead them to move. The impact of climate change contributing to conflict and the subsequent displacement has been described by a number of Caritas Members in Africa, such as in **Mozambique (BOX 5)**, Somalia, Kenya and the Sahel, including, Burkina Faso.

2.6 Too much hardship: human rights violations and losses and damages

While many efforts, including Caritas', seek to protect, welcome, promote and integrate¹⁰ persons in situations of displacement due to climate change, they are simply not in proportion with the magnitude of the protection and support actually needed. As demonstrated below, people on the move due to climate change are globally left to their own devices and bear the weight of multiple violations of their human rights - economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political - and associated losses and damages.

8 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5334-providing-legal-options-protect-human-rights-persons-displaced>

9 https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter07.pdf

10 https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170221_forum-migrazioni-pace.html

2.6.1 Leaving: a trauma

Most of the people on the brink of, or already, moving due to climate change are people whose lives have been deeply connected to the environment and community in which they live. The spiritual and psychological trauma associated with leaving their original environment and way of life can be enormous, as in the Torres Strait and **Fiji (BOX 2)**. Finding themselves in a new environmental and cultural context can be highly destabilising. In **Angola (BOX 4)**, people have been observed to suffer due to not being able to celebrate their traditional rituals, having lost their community ties and living in a new setting.

2.6.2 High precariousness

When people move because their place of usual residence is - suddenly or gradually - becoming uninhabitable and the sudden or gradual decline in productivity of their land or water based activity due to climate change no longer allows them to meet the needs of their household, they are likely to find themselves in a very precarious situation when they go. With no or little income and with home and land assets which have lost most of their value due to climate change, people may take off with few means to ensure their subsistence, if any. Access to food, shelter, health care and education becomes complicated or impossible, as in **Angola (BOX 4)** and **Djibouti (BOX 8)**. This precariousness only deepens if left without support. The CLAMOR¹¹ network has observed precariousness to be on the rise amongst people on the move in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

2.6.3 Disintegration of households

Caritas members who are at the side of people affected by displacement due to climate change witness how communities and households are torn apart and, in the process, become more vulnerable.

In many cases, Caritas has found that young and adult men tend to move first in the hope of finding a job elsewhere in order to supplement the income of the household when it has been negatively affected by the declining productivity of their land or water based

11 The Latin American Church Network and Caribbean Migration, Refuge, Displacement and Trafficking of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CLAMOR)

2 – Torres Strait and Fiji

Authors: Sophie Jenkins and Connor McBride, Caritas Oceania

» Moving: the trauma

When Pacific communities have to move, they risk losing their ways of life and their cultural heritage. Their sense of connection to themselves, to their communities and to nature are deeply affected. The alteration of land-related cultural traditions leads to social disruption, conflict and even violence. The strong sociocultural, religious and historical connections of Pacific Islanders to their homes means that moving permanently is a substantial decision that comes at great cost. It cannot be taken lightly, as illustrated below.

» Torres Strait islanders: a health emergency

The low-lying Torres Strait Islands are home to communities who have lived with a deep connection to the lands, seas and skies for over 65,000 years. Now, king tides, coastal erosion, flooding and coral bleaching are not only threatening homes, lives and livelihoods. Sacred sites and burial grounds are also being destroyed and ancestral homelands are being submerged.

When this happens and they have to move, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel disconnected from the spirits of the land' and their mental, spiritual and physical health and wellbeing are deeply affected. In 2020, the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) declared climate change 'a health emergency which threatens the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and cultures, as well as the broader population.'

» Fiji islanders: despair

Vabea, Waisomo and Narikoso, villages in the island of Ono in Fiji, were all devastated by cyclone Harold in April 2020. Hundreds of houses, community centres and cultural heritage and sacred sites were damaged or washed away by coastal erosion. People were displaced.

They are still having difficulty adapting to their new lives. The experience of social disruption and loss has led to frustration, withdrawal, family fragmentation and difficulty maintaining important traditional practices. They are unwell and stressed, both mentally and physically. There is a sense of despair about the future. The people who were displaced are losing their individual and collective sense of identity. They feel negative about their role and place in society.



activity due to climate change, as in **Guatemala (BOX 3)**, **Angola (BOX 4)** and **Bangladesh (BOX 6)**. The hope is that the supplemental income will alleviate the food insecurity of the household and cover other needs, but the men are not always able to send remittances home. Jobs which pay sufficiently can be difficult to come by, as found by Caritas Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the women who have been left behind as heads of households have difficulty accomplishing their normal tasks of caring for the home, children, elderly and other family members and of producing and gathering food and other necessities, while at the same time doing the heavy work normally accomplished by the men. The women-headed households often fall into further poverty. As a result children too may have to take on responsibilities within the household, and schooling is often interrupted. Sometimes they even end up having to leave and try to fend for themselves when their basic needs cannot be covered. Eventually, as the place of usual residence becomes more uninhabitable, households headed by women may also have to move, as in **Guatemala (BOX 3)** and **Angola (BOX 4)**.

The composition of the cross-border migrant population coming from countries severely affected by climate change corresponds to the explanation above: a great majority of men, but also women and children, including numerous unaccompanied children, as noted in **Guatemala (BOX 3)**, in **Djibouti (BOX 8)** and by the CLAMOR network.

2.6.4 Discrimination, abuse, exploitation, trafficking

Once they leave, persons displaced due to climate change may find themselves travelling together with people on the move for different reasons, using the same routes and means of transport. Due to their initial situation of great precariousness and vulnerability, and the lack of support systems to accompany this process, people who have had to leave their usual place of residence due to climate change easily become the victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking, just as would be any vulnerable and unsupported person on the move.

This happens including when people stay within the borders of their own country. In **Angola**, Caritas finds the Government has created neither social and economic services nor infrastructure to welcome the thousands of people who have to move, including to urban areas (**BOX 4**). As a result, they fall prey to unscrupulous individuals and suffer human rights violations.

← In Toguru, Navua on the Island of Vitilevu places of rituals such as burial sites and graves have been lost due to sea level rise.

Accessing resources can be made especially challenging to groups of people typically subject to discrimination. Worse even if they find themselves in areas occupied by different ethnic groups to theirs. In the case of land, women can face acute difficulties, compounded by the fact that they already rarely have access to land tenure under normal circumstances. In Tonga, Caritas reports that, because women cannot own land, they cannot obtain financing to rebuild their homes in the aftermath of a storm. Being homeless puts their household at risk of abuse. In both Senegal and in **Angola (BOX 4)**, Caritas partners report that internally displaced women suffer from discrimination and find it particularly difficult to access land, water and other resources in host communities.

Access to jobs can also be difficult, especially if people on the move have not previously received any training. Many who move end up having to take extremely difficult jobs for little pay, and sometimes children are even pushed into prostitution, as in **Guatemala (BOX 3)** and **Angola (BOX 4)**.

2.6.5 Conflict, violence and successive moves

The arrival of large numbers of new settlers in an area can put pressure on local resources, increase the vulnerability of the area itself to climate impacts and lead to conflict with the host community. For example, water in an area subject to drought can become scarce or people may have to go further afield for firewood due to increased extraction. The host population - typically itself in a vulnerable position - may turn against the new settlers. They can be subjected to violence, as has been described by Caritas members in various African countries: **Mozambique (BOX 5)**, Kenya, Somalia, and the Sahel, including Burkina Faso. This can lead to further displacement.

Often, because they have lost most of their resources, people who have moved internally due to the impacts of climate change, or other reasons such as conflict, can only afford to settle on low value marginal land which may be prone to hazards such as flooding and landslides. Caritas members in Syria and Yemen report that many people have been displaced successive times due to flooding, in addition to ongoing conflict.

2.6.6 Crossing borders without permission: a risky proposition

When people who have left their place of usual residence due to climate change are unable to meet the needs of their household with-

in borders and decide to cross borders, they may fall into an even deeper state of vulnerability. If no policies and legal frameworks are in place to ensure a safe and regular entry into the country for people in their situation, out of desperation they attempt often dangerous and irregular border crossings, only to be in an irregular status in the country of arrival. In doing so, they are subjected to the same travails as persons crossing borders irregularly for different reasons but in similar states of precariousness.

The journeys and border crossings are often undertaken in inhumane conditions: people may travel on foot over very large distances, sometimes thousands of kilometres, have access to very little food, water or shelter, be exposed to adverse weather, shipwrecks, and such human rights violations as assault, forced recruitment by armed groups, sexual abuse, torture, and human trafficking, among other hardships and human rights violations, as observed in **Guatemala (BOX 3)**, **Djibouti (BOX 8)** and South Africa.

“ Many people put their lives in danger crossing the borders irregularly to enter South Africa. Some try to swim across the rivers separating countries and sometimes drown and die. Others brave the wild animals and cross through national parks. Most migrants are exploited and women and children get raped along the way. They are at the mercy of people who present themselves as agents and promise to help them cross into South Africa. ”

Sister Maria de Lurdes Rissini, Caritas South Africa

Once across the border, people are exposed to the same risks as they may have been exposed to as they moved within their country of origin but with possibly more extreme xenophobia, fewer or no rights due to their irregular status, nor support from the government of their country of origin. Many are left to turn for support to faith based organisations, such as Caritas or local Churches, as in South Africa. Without a work permit and with inadequate training, formal labour markets may be out of reach. People may suffer from labour exploitation, living as street dwellers, denial of access to medical services and education for children, as described by Caritas members in South Africa and **Angola (BOX 4)**. In **Djibouti**, tensions with the host population arise over the perception that the newcomers are stealing jobs (**BOX 7**). Also, many people who have left **Bangladesh** to work overseas, particularly women, have been victims of abuse and exploitation (**BOX 5**).

3 – Guatemala

Authors: Mario Bernabe Arevalo Jucub, Caritas Guatemala

» The Dry Corridor: from displacement in stages to higher vulnerability

Hurricanes bring strong winds and heavy rainfall to Central America's Caribbean coastline, and a region called the Dry Corridor, is experiencing a severe drought. Poverty and insecurity used to be considered the main causes of migration, but in the past ten years, climatic conditions in Guatemala started exacerbating difficulties in covering basic needs. They now contribute to massive displacement.

In the Dry Corridor, where Caritas seeks to help farmers and communities build resilience to climate change, it estimates around 125,000 families are falling deeper into poverty, extreme poverty and food insecurity. They used to be able to rely on agricultural production for their economic subsistence. Now they are barely surviving.^I Low yields and crop failures lead to increasing rates of malnourishment. Farmers are so desperate they resort to selling their assets such as tools or even land.

Many seek alternative livelihood options to make ends meet. In 2014, extreme cases started appearing where, at first, family members started offering their labour on neighbouring farms, being paid next to nothing and working in strenuous conditions. Some eventually migrated a little further away to become labourers on sugar cane and palm plantations. Others crossed borders to work temporarily in neighbouring countries. Now they go further afield.

Records show that, initially, only the head of the family migrated abroad hoping to earn an income to send the family. Later, other members of the family followed suit. Now the dynamic has changed, the number of people on the move across borders from all over the country is increasing drastically. They are mostly young people, mainly men, but the proportion of women under twenty is growing. Even entire families leave,^{II} in spite of the many risks involved. And in 2020, the number of unaccompanied minors migrating began to grow sharply.

» Abuse and trafficking to cross borders

People in precarious situations are increasingly forced to resort to irregular entry into the United States. Caritas conducts awareness raising activities to inform them of the risks, including falling prey to drug and human trafficking networks and being subjected to sexual exploitation, forced labour or organ removal. "Coyotes" - people smugglers - are profiting from people's desperation. People pay them up to fifteen thousand US dollars to cross the US border.^{III} Some take on huge debts at high interest rates and lose their homes and belongings to meet payments. Often they fail to avoid border custody and many are returned.

» Deported and without options

In 2021, over 57,000 persons were returned to Guatemala from Mexico and the United States. Close to one tenth were unaccompanied minors. No government policy supports integration into the workforce, let alone for those who are deported. People who are returned have no support. This puts their families in situations of hardship. They are left with no other option but to try again to enter Mexico and the United States irregularly.

In some cases, to arrive at the country of final destination, people on the move due to climate change expose themselves to successive risky border crossings and to being in an irregular status in several countries, each with its own culture, legal context and other challenges as observed in **Guatemala (BOX 3)** and **Djibouti (BOX 8)**.

2.6.7 Facing deportation

Some people on the move due to climate change choose to return to their place of origin. For many, crossing a border and not benefiting from a legal status in the country of transit or of destination nevertheless implies living in fear of being apprehended and deported at any time, back to a place of origin increasingly affected by climate change. Caritas South Africa finds this is often the case for those who have crossed over from countries in the region, along with other persons who have entered for different reasons.

If there is no programme to welcome and help the returning person or family, reintegrate their place and community of origin and develop a sustainable livelihood, if the place of residence is still uninhabitable, if there is no way to secure a sustainable livelihood, due to a climate that has changed - for example due to an ever deepening state of drought or water salinisation - then there is no option but to move again, as observed in **Guatemala (BOX 3)** and **Angola (BOX 4)**.

2.6.8 The need for protection and support

As described, at present, it is Caritas' experience that households, whose lives are so impacted by climate change that some members, or all, leave their place of usual residence, receive vastly insufficient support and recognition. As a result many are subjected, at all stages of their journey, to numerous human rights violations and are left to bear alone the many costs of having to adapt to a changing climate, leaving behind their homes, livelihoods and attachments. These violations and costs affect not only the household members who move but also host communities and those who stay behind.

I <https://www.fao.org/americas/prioridades/corredor-seco/es/>

II <https://dcid.sanford.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/03/Migration-Policy-Brief-Guatemala-FINAL.pdf>

III <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/justicia/asi-pudo-opera-la-banda-de-coyotes-detras-de-los-migrantes-del-accidente-en-chiapas-breaking/>

4 – Angola

Authors: Fr Pio Wacussanga S.J., Associação Construindo Comunidades in Lubango and Ame Naame Omuno, in Cunene

» Angola's worst drought: families torn apart

In Angola, over 1.5 million people, belonging to rural communities and minority ethnic groups, in the south-western provinces of Cunene, Huila and Namibe are facing severe hunger. The worst drought in 40 years leaves fields barren, pasture lands dry, and food reserves depleted. Displacement of families to other provinces and neighbouring Namibia in search of water and grazing for cattle has been registered in the south of the country.

Wives and husbands used to produce enough food for their families. Now food insecurity is such that well over 100,000 children have fallen into severe acute malnutrition, with serious effects on their physical and mental development. While a cash transfer programme was initiated by the government, very few families benefit.

The prolonged droughts of the past decade have greatly fragmented the unity of many families. Men have left the women as heads of households and migrated to cities, where they try to earn a wage. Some manage to send money back to their families, others do not. Women are therefore forced to take on the men's agricultural and pastoral tasks in addition to their own and to looking after the children and the elderly, fetching firewood and water, and preparing food for the family. Overburdened and overstretched, their life expectancy decreases.

» Life in camps and cities along migration routes: unsupported, exploited, abused and bereft

Rural communities and ethnic minorities have had to abandon their areas of origin. Many families move to live by the side of roads where they extract firewood and produce charcoal sold for low prices. Others, mostly women, reach urban centres where they try to survive on precarious support from the Government, Church and civil society groups. Minority ethnic groups - Hakavona, Kuvale and Ndzimba - are repeatedly seen selling artefacts or their labour. They are paid a misery to carry water, construction materials, or firewood. The Government has neither created services nor infrastructure in urban areas to cater to the thousands of persons displaced by the impacts of climate change.

Many people displaced by hunger have been collected and confined to provisional reception camps by the provincial government, with no sanitation, tents, or sufficient food. This forces them to work in precarious conditions. These camps are the place of choice to recruit cheap labour for heavy work.

As newcomers, it is very difficult for displaced women to find land to farm and access resources. Women from the Hakavona and Kuvale minorities cannot farm in areas where the Nyaneka are a majority. San women in Cunene have difficulties with Bantu women when it comes to the use of water and other resources.

In Lubango, thousands of unaccompanied children and young people, from minority ethnic groups - Mwila, Kuvale, Ngambwe - wander the streets. Their number has grown exponentially. They left their communities when their parents could no longer support them due to the drought. They are left searching every day for a means of survival. Some beg in front of shops, others work informally as porters, cooks and washing dishes. Sooner or later, they join the underworld of theft, criminality, drug use and prostitution.

Where climate displaced communities are temporarily housed, they have no access to education, literacy or any kind of training, worse even for unaccompanied minors. In addition, ethnic minorities in the south of Angola in general, have few vocational training opportunities. It is therefore extremely complicated for them to access the labour market when displaced.



© Associação Construindo Comunidades in Lubango, Angola

Further adding to their trauma, uprooted ethnic groups in Southern Angola are unable to maintain the collective memory of their people and celebrate the important rituals of their family and community lives. In new settings, and without means, they can no longer practise circumcision, girls' initiation into adulthood, and funerary, birth, fire, and rain rituals. Some traditional leaders do not allow burial outside of the ancestral land, adding to the tragedy when a person on the move due to climate change dies.

» Life across borders: missed opportunities

Crossing the border into a neighbouring country can further add to the difficulties encountered. Here again, since the overwhelming majority of those who have made it to Namibia or Zambia have no formal qualifications, they cannot compete in the labour market. They roam the villages, towns and farms in search of precarious work. Angolan consulates and international agencies do not provide any support to these people displaced by climate change. They are left completely to their own devices to seek means, resources, services and work, with all that this implies.

Education and vocational training could help displaced persons make a positive contribution to their host countries. Presently, children and youth displaced across the border have no chance of studying. In the past, the Zambian Government had invested in integrating and building the capacity of war refugees to join the national workforce so that their communities could sustain themselves. As a result Zambian maize production increased exponentially.

» Life upon return: abandoned

Recently, the Angolan State, in collaboration with the Namibian government, forced many families to return to the Huila and Cunene provinces. They told them they would receive food support until the rain returned. Upon arrival each family received 25 kilograms of maize flour, 5 kilograms of beans and two liters of vegetable oil, but were then abandoned. The food ran out rapidly and the families had to return to Namibia by their own means. Displaced families will not want to return from Namibia and Zambia for the time being, unless a social safety net is negotiated. There are no good examples of successful repatriation to Angola.

3

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Address present human rights violations and plan ahead

We know many are suffering today because they must move due to the impacts of climate change. We also know that unless state leaders take bold actions to mitigate the global warming of the Earth and increase resilience, many more people will have to depart from their usual place of residence.

Therefore, it is necessary to address the present suffering and plan ahead to lessen the high human, social, economic and political costs caused by haphazard displacement. States can not only prepare for the protection and support of their populations in the face of disasters due to climate change, but can also take proactive measures. They can establish policy frameworks which enable individuals and communities to preemptively and voluntarily move in a safe, organised, and regular manner. By providing individuals with the necessary protection and support throughout all stages of their displacement - pre-departure, in transit, at destination and upon potential return - and facilitating their ability to rebuild their lives in new locations, the State can empower them to transition from being recipients to actively making positive contributions to their host community.

To address the multidimensional needs of people on the move due to climate change, a multisectoral approach is required. For example, to cater to the distinct needs of returnees, Caritas **Bangladesh** has developed a holistic approach to promoting reintegration including reception services, shelter, counselling, legal aid, medical assistance, reunification, vocational training and support for finding jobs (**BOX 5**).

Governments need to coordinate their many actors and bodies, and work with local civil society, to ensure “no one is left behind” in line with their Sustainable Development Goals pledge in planning and implementing programmes. Comprehensive planning processes can promote collaboration between sectors and bring more coherence to their policies; for example,

3.1 A holistic approach is required for each stage of displacement

3.2 Adapt and increase service capacity

between agriculture and migration.¹

Not only does a comprehensive policy framework - including legal provisions - need to be put in place, but also the corresponding social and economic service capacity and physical infrastructure necessary to protect and support all persons displaced due to climate change at all stages of their journey, as well as their host community and those left behind.

Accommodating a growing number of persons who have to move in response to climate change requires major efforts in both urban and rural development planning. The host government, whether local or national, needs to provide physical and social infrastructure to guarantee access to essential services - including housing, education, health care and transportation - that can accommodate persons displaced due to climate change and at the same time stimulate the creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities.^{2,3}

Caritas, together with local Catholic churches, has long been at the side of people in situations of vulnerability and precariousness due to migration, regardless of the cause. The range of social and economic services Caritas offers to address unmet needs and human rights violations at all stages of migration attests to the protection and support void left by governments reluctant to face their responsibilities towards people on the move.

People need support even before they move - so they can stay where they live, but also, for example, so they can make informed decisions about their movement; along the way; once in the host community; and in the event they return to their place of usual residence. These needs are reflected in the way Caritas Members design their support programs in Senegal and in **Bangladesh (BOX 6)**.

Because government support is so scant and Caritas has so many initiatives throughout the world, an emphasis was recently put on networking between the different initiatives to ensure displaced people know where to turn for help.

Two networks were recently developed to cover the Southern Africa and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, respectively. Among the services offered in Southern Africa is a program providing guidance and assistance to prevent risks associated with the "irregular" crossing of borders. In Latin

1 <https://ehs.unu.edu/research/integrating-migration-from-a-rural-livelihoods-perspective-in-nap-and-ndc-processes.html#outline>

2 https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_climate-dev-banks_final.pdf

3 <https://publications.iom.int/books/internal-displacement-context-slow-onset-adverse-effects-climate-change>

America and the Caribbean, the CLAMOR⁴ network has mapped out 636 Church and Caritas initiatives in 22 countries, offering a long list of services to people on the move due to climate change: emergency shelter, food, clothing, health care, transportation, psychosocial and spiritual support, awareness raising campaigns, protection for the most vulnerable, support to access to labour markets, vocational training and help with entrepreneurship, support to integrate within the host community through language learning, sociocultural integration programmes, support to access education and recognition of diplomas, legal assistance, document processing counselling, advocacy, research and, last but not least, return programmes.

Government support for persons returning to their place of origin is also scarce or nonexistent. Caritas Members in **Bangladesh (BOX 6)**, Guinea Conakry and Senegal seek to fill this gap and offer vocational training and job creation support to promote livelihood options for returnees which are resilient to climate change. In **Angola (BOX 4)**, Caritas recommends minimum support conditions and a social framework for voluntary return processes.

Specific groups of people have different unmet needs, and services should be designed to address these. For example, Caritas Senegal advocates the creation of special tenure programmes to ensure land access for women displaced internally and across borders. In Indonesia, Caritas does its best to support women, left behind after their husbands migrated, to provide for their families through agriculture. In **Djibouti (BOX 8)**, Caritas programmes attend to the needs of unaccompanied children, while Caritas **Angola (BOX 4)** points to the need for such programmes.

In conclusion, governments need to plan ahead, and make the necessary adjustments to be able to respond to the wide range of service needs generated by displacement due to climate change in all situations and at all stages, including for those returning, left behind and belonging to vulnerable groups. Because Civil Society Organisations are close to the people on the move, they are well aware of their needs and how to address them. Nevertheless, while organisations such as Caritas are important partners when it comes to designing and implementing services, such as in **Djibouti (BOX 8)**, providing services to the people in their jurisdictions is the responsibility of governments.

4 Latin American Church Network and Caribbean Migration, Refuge, Displacement and Trafficking of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CLAMOR)



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↑ Effects of Tropical Cyclone Amphan in Bangladesh.

3.3 Improve physical infrastructure

Infrastructure investments, informed by rural and urban planning, are necessary to accommodate the needs generated by growing numbers of persons moving due to climate change.⁵ Climate resilient infrastructure investments could prevent the collapse of existing systems and ensure that both newly arrived and host communities live in dignified and sustainable conditions. Here too, many governments have yet to rise to the occasion. In Niger, Caritas is doing its best to improve access to drinking water in areas where large populations of displaced people are putting pressure on the host area water resource.

Informal settlements further increase people's vulnerability to impacts of climate change.⁶ For example, Caritas Colombia explains that most of the humanitarian support it provides every year is related to the fact that thousands of displaced people have established precarious dwellings on marginal lands in urban slums only to find themselves further displaced by flooding and landslides.

Governments and communities need to adapt land use and existing infrastructure for new arrivals or create appropriate new infrastructure for sanitation, water, transportation, health, education and other areas. Through planning one can avoid further disaster and subsequent displacement.⁷

3.4 Plan together and value traditional solutions

Affected communities, both those considering a move or already in such a situation, and host communities, need to be actively involved in any planning and implementation process to ensure it responds to their actual needs and aspirations.

This point is important in all configurations of displacement. Where persons who had to move due to climate change suffer from trauma, losses, have been abused, or when conflict has occurred, Caritas **Angola** describes how traditional practices can be of great help (BOX 9).

Community involvement is also particularly relevant in the case of planned relocations. While relocation may be the only adaptation mechanism left in many circumstances, it can only be successful with proper consultation, full agreement and participation of the communities concerned at all stages of the process. Otherwise, if they can, people may end up going back to their place of origin in spite of the great difficulties and risks associated with living in an environment severely affected by climate change as in **Mozambique** (BOX 5) and **Papua New Guinea** (BOX 7). For Fiji, Caritas Oceania

⁵ https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_climate-dev-banks_final.pdf

⁶ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

⁷ https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_climate-dev-banks_final.pdf

5 – Mozambique

Author: Santos Gotine, Caritas Mozambique

» Flooding and resettlement neighborhoods

In Mozambique, the most visible adverse climate change effects are the floods, especially when they hit the densely populated delta areas. Floods cause massive displacements of population in search of shelter, water and food. They damage housing and cause famine and disease when they destroy crops, submerge arable land and cause seawater to salinise freshwater reserves.

A succession of devastating flooding events linked to cyclones has displaced thousands of people over the past few years and led to the emergence of numerous resettlement neighbourhoods in the country. Most recently, nearly 100,000 people were displaced when Cyclone Freddy hit the Zambezian coast in March 2023, with winds gusts over 200 Km/h, and rains of over 200mm.

“ Now we have to live here at Manhaua Primary School, which provides temporary shelter for me, my family, and hundreds of people who lost their homes due to the cyclone and flooding. After this place, we do not know where we are going because my mum said that we are not going back to our location. ”

SALUDI DINA, 9 years old

Resettlement neighbourhoods remove populations from zones at risk and minimise vulnerability to climate events. Nevertheless, according to local officials, some resettled people return to their places of origin, alleging that the resettlement sites do not provide conditions for dignified living, because they lack schools, health units, transportation networks and fertile soils for the practice of agriculture, and also suffer from cultural and social power issues. Some people resettled in the city of Beira choose to return to risky places, leaving their children behind at the resettlement sites.

» Not just flooding

Beyond flooding, Caritas has registered that people have to move due to heat waves, animal deaths and droughts in the Maputo and Gaza provinces and cyclones, coastal erosion, the rising sea level and salinisation of soils in the coastal area. These phenomena linked to climate change cause serious problems for the lives and livelihoods of Mozambican communities and negatively affect their health and their access to physical and social infrastructure. As a result, conflicts erupt and people are forced to migrate to other regions or other countries.

» The need for urban planning

In Mozambique, while it is unclear what proportion is linked to climate change, accelerated rural exodus has led to great population growth in the peripheries of urban areas. The main cities are unable to absorb such arrivals of population. As a consequence poor and precarious neighbourhoods have formed, sorely lacking infrastructure and plagued by abusive and irregular housing conditions. People who have migrated to these urban outskirts are predominantly unemployed or work in precarious conditions.

Caritas Mozambique believes that long term planning would help to better face future climate change hazards and improve resettlement programs. A better understanding of the links between climate change and dis-



placement and databases, with updated information, including impact indicators and monitoring, risk and cost assessments, would allow for better policy making. Professionals need to have better access to information and training on environmental risk management and forced displacements caused by climate change.

explains how the issues associated with the government relocation of the Narikoso village eventually led to drawing up national relocation guidelines which are community-centric.⁸ Yet, while sorely needed, such guidelines remain rare.⁹

Host communities also have needs. Addressing these needs at the same time as addressing those of newcomers is essential to promoting social cohesion. Any initiative of land use, physical and social infrastructure planning and creation of livelihood opportunities should take into account both parties. Attending to people on the basis of their state of vulnerability, rather than of mobility, in areas where there are new settlers can defuse conflict. As said by a member of Caritas in Burkina Faso, 'the displacement of populations causes conflicts over arable land in the host areas and undermines social cohesion. Put together, human security, climate and environmental issues generate a vicious circle: they provoke migratory flows which end up generating conflicts. Actions in favour of cohesion and peace are therefore imperative.'¹⁰ Caritas Burkina Faso therefore works on social cohesion while providing food assistance and agricultural support, promoting environmental protection and job creation.¹¹

Caritas members in Colombia, Guatemala, **Oceania (BOX 1)** and **Mozambique (BOX 5)** all point to the importance of improving data collection on displacement due to climate change. Indeed, reliable data and modelling are essential to understanding the issue of displacement due to climate change and making predictions about the future. They are necessary to design and implement responses to ensure that human rights of both the people who have to move, and those of their host communities, are respected. While relatively reasonable datasets on sudden onset disasters exist, there are significant gaps in the availability of data regarding displacement due to slow onset climate change events, due to the complex nature of such mobility. Official databases generally lack disaggregation and information about the causes of migration.¹²

Due to the fact that climate change negatively impacts productivity, people often associate their need to move with the need to find a new source of livelihood. They may not consider climate change as a reason for their

8 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c3c92204.html>

9 https://researchinginternaldisplacement.org/short_pieces/planned-relocations-what-we-know-dont-know-and-need-to-learn/

10 Rita Zougrana from Caritas Burkina Faso

11 https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_climate-dev-banks_final.pdf

12 https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter07.pdf

3.5 Host communities have needs too

3.6 Planning requires data and modelling

3.7 Make full use of existing planning instruments

move but rather the need for a job, especially if they moved in stages.¹³ This complicates the gathering of reliable information and may lead to a serious underestimation of the contribution of climate change to population movements. For example, a study conducted by USAid in 2021 concluded that while almost all the Honduran people who said they intended to migrate to the US cited economic reasons, almost half also cited environmental hazards as a reason when specifically asked.¹⁴

While the participation of civil society organisations is essential to ensuring the relevance of data collection, management and interpretation, these primarily remain the responsibility of governments. Governments urgently need to increase their efforts as regards data gathering related to displacement due to climate change.

Addressing displacement due to climate change in all relevant planning processes and fora can contribute to enabling proactive migration that is safe, regular and orderly.

Processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and national climate policies are of particular relevance. Both the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) are powerful planning instruments for national and local governments which could be used to address migration as an adaptation response. Unfortunately, while a number of the NDCs and NAPs submitted do mention migration, few outline concrete plans to accompany this process.^{15 16} Yet the 2015 Paris Agreement, signed by 196 countries, refers to the rights of migrants in its preamble.¹⁷

National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies are other important instruments for migration to be factored into planning. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, recognises displacement, linked to both sudden onset and slow onset events, as an important issue linked to climate change. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) recommends implementing 'measures to help disaster displaced people'¹⁸ achieve durable solutions and recognises supporting voluntary migration and planned relocation as options to avoid disaster. Nevertheless, far more remains

13 From a remark by Fanny Curet of the Réseau Afrique-Europe pour la Mobilité Humaine (RAEMH)

14 https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z3S7.pdf

15 <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/20180917%20WIM%20TFD%201.1%20Output%20final.pdf>

16 <https://migration4development.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Scoping%20Paper%20-%20Human%20Mobility%20in%20NDCs%20and%20NAPs.pdf>

17 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

18 https://www.preventionweb.net/files/58821_wiadisasterdisplacement190511webeng.pdf

to be done to account for this recommendation in most countries' DRR plans.¹⁹

To ensure effective long-term planning at international, regional, national, and local levels, it is essential to take into account and address displacement due to climate change into development initiatives and align the policies of all relevant agencies accordingly. By adopting comprehensive strategies, opportunities can be generated in low-risk areas with well-developed infrastructure and services that can accommodate the needs of incoming populations.²⁰

While the adoption of such an approach still remains extremely limited among states, it is worth citing a few notable instances where it has been implemented, such as in **Bangladesh (BOX 6)**, and in Oceania, where Caritas describes Kiribati's Migration with Dignity policy. The latter aims 'to improve education levels and vocational qualifications of [their] people so that they have greater access to employment opportunities in receiving countries' when they move. Finally, with its own policy Vanuatu ensures 'human mobility considerations are mainstreamed into [...] planning at national, provincial and local levels [...] to provide protection for people at each stage of the displacement cycle.'²¹

With appropriate planning, the trauma of displacement can be lessened and development opportunities can be created for those who move, for their host community and for the community of origin. From a strictly economic point of view, while initial investments are needed, they can rapidly pay off. A recent IMF study concluded that while 'immigration into advanced economies' has an immediate positive economic impact, international cooperation is necessary to help the 'emerging and developing economies' - where most displacement due to climate happens - welcome newcomers.²² It also concluded that policies to support the social and labour market integration of newcomers have a positive economic impact, as witnessed by Caritas **Angola (BOX 4)**.

19 https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/downloads/fachpublikationen/analyse/Addressing_the_protection_gap_01.pdf

20 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2018/03/19/groundswell-preparing-for-internal-climate-migration>

21 https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/press_release/file/iom-vanuatu-policy-climate-change-disaster-induced-displacement-2018.pdf

22 <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020#Chapter%204>

6 – Bangladesh

Authors: Sebastian Rozario and Anjalina Diana Podder, Caritas Bangladesh and Richard Sloman, CAFOD

» Displacement: on the rise, in stage

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change.^I Sudden shocks such as cyclones, flash flooding and tidal surges are growing in frequency and becoming increasingly severe; temperatures are rising and saltwater intrusion is affecting agricultural land, drinking water and even the reproductive health of women and girls, causing miscarriages and infertility. Flooding alone, during the monsoon season, displaces a million people per year on average,^{II} while riverbank erosion is responsible for between 50,000 and 200,000 displaced every year.^{III} For the millions of people living in the coastal area of Bangladesh, the increasing intensity and frequency of these events damage homes, their health, livestock, and livelihoods and make it more and more challenging to generate an income.^{IV}

In response, families apply various coping strategies. Many try to stay locally and adapt to the changing situation. Many migrate. Often they follow a stepping stone pattern of short migrations from rural areas to regional towns or to larger cities such as Dhaka, seasonally or longer term. Displacement is becoming more frequent and longer in duration. Hundreds of thousands of people migrate within Bangladesh, either seasonally or longer term in search of a better life. More and more Bangladeshis go searching for work overseas through official and unofficial channels.

To cater to the many needs of people on the move due to climate change, Caritas Bangladesh and the Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) offer holistic support tailored to each phase of displacement: pre-displacement, displacement and post-displacement.

» Holistic reintegration support

Overseas migrants are vital contributors to the country's economy through their remittances, nearing 10% of Bangladesh's GDP in recent years.^V Many migrate successfully, but not all. Women in particular may face sexual and mental abuse, exploitation, manipulation, and other violation of rights during recruitment in Bangladesh and employment overseas.^{VI}

Caritas Bangladesh and OKUP offer support for vulnerable returnee migrants and survivors of modern slavery. They find that to prevent risky re-emigration, comprehensive support, over the short and long run, is necessary for the successful reintegration of returnees, both voluntary and forced. They complement livelihoods and economic support with airport pick up, shelter homes, trauma-informed counselling, legal aid, access to health and medical care, family reunification, and life skills training. Key to success is a referral system with Bangladeshi High Commissions in Middle Eastern countries to link migrants to services when they return.

I Germanwatch (reliefweb.int)

II <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/bangladesh>

III <https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/files/PB-5-max-29102013.pdf>

IV <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/insights-migration-amid-climate-change>

V <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=BD>

VI https://okup.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Access_Justice_Report_2019-1.pdf

Caritas Bangladesh and OKUP also advocate for the Government to provide health grants, low interest bank loans to start businesses and social safety nets to all returning migrants. While the most vulnerable are the undocumented migrants, they tend to be unable to access vital rights and entitlements. They are the most likely to be survivors of abuse and exploitation and to want to remain in Bangladesh after their return. Yet, because they migrated without proper documentation, they do not meet the criteria to benefit from support from the Government.

» Job opportunities away from vulnerable areas

“ For climate migrants the problem is much bigger (...) since the migrants are back home and jobless and they also have to deal with cyclones and floods. ”

SHAKIRUL ISLAM, OKUP

Because traditional livelihoods are becoming less viable due to climate change, climate resilient income earning opportunities must be offered to returnees. Caritas/OKUP supports young people living in extremely vulnerable climate change coastal areas to acquire the skills necessary to work in neighbouring regional towns less affected by climate change, in line with Bangladesh's National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement.^{VII}

“ The changing rainfall, the frequent cyclone, flood, tidal surge etc. polluted our farmland and it became barren. So my father went to a city and started working as a carpenter. I completed my Secondary School Certificate and was dreaming of going to college but my father wanted me to join him and learn carpentry as we were living in poverty. I could not make up my mind. I then got a chance to attend an OKUP training. I became interested in getting mobile phone servicing training when they proposed it for free. After the training I set up a 'mobile servicing shop' in my village. Now I earn 800 taka (8 EUR) per day, on average. ”

AFZAL, AGE 20, KHULNA

Vocational training, small grants and job placement can help develop viable livelihood adaptations to climate change. They can enhance preemptive migration, avoiding large scale displacement in the future.^{VIII}

VII <http://www.rmmru.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NSMDCIID.pdf>

VIII <https://www.icccad.net/publications/policy-briefs/building-climate-resilient-migrant-friendly-cities-and-towns/>



© Photo by Armit Rudro for CRS/Caritas Bangladesh

↑ Effects of Tropical Cyclone Amphan in Bangladesh.

4

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Vastly increase funding to ensure migration with dignity

4.1 Large investments are required in countries which do not have the means...

Great investments in social and physical infrastructure are required to welcome, protect, promote and integrate people on the move due to the adverse impacts of climate change, both today and tomorrow. In addition, large scale displacement, both internal and external, imposes high economic costs on developing nations, especially low-income, and renders achieving the Sustainable Development Goals yet more elusive.¹

The vast majority of displacement due to climate change takes place in lower income and middle income countries, among which are the group of least developed countries (LDCs), whose economies and tax revenues, national and local, are already negatively affected by climate change. The governments of many of the countries most vulnerable to climate change struggle to provide services for their populations in general. A large proportion are highly indebted and have difficulty servicing their debt. In fact there is a high correlation between climate- and debt-vulnerability² and many of the affected countries have very little fiscal space and institutional capacity to deal with added challenges.

4.2 ...to deal with the consequences of a problem they did not cause

At the same time, most of the countries struggling to care for people on the move due to climate change account for very little of the emissions which cause this problem. For example, the 46 LDCs - including eight Small Island States (SIDS) - which count for many of the most climate vulnerable countries, are responsible for only 3.3% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.³ Expecting these climate vulnerable countries to shoulder by themselves the impacts of a problem they did not cause historically, and to which they contribute minimally today, is neither feasible nor fair.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/desa/economic-and-political-costs-population-displacement-and-their-impact-sdgs-and>

² <https://www.undp.org/library/dfs-unprecedented-opportunity-boost-finance-development>

³ <https://www.undp.org/publications/state-climate-ambition-snapshots-least-developed-countries-lDCs-and-small-island-developing-states-sids>

4.3 Too little funding

In an effort to address this issue, developed countries made a commitment in 2009, during COP15, to raise US\$100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries. Nevertheless, this well-meaning commitment was never fulfilled, and in 2020 it still fell short by over 15%. Of the funds raised, in 2020 only one third was spent on adaptation, while the rest was dedicated to mitigation.

Caritas Tonga reports that, from 2010-2018, the vast majority of climate finance went to mitigation projects on the ground. Once energy supply projects are removed from being counted as “adaptation projects”, the proportion of finance actually spent in Tonga on adaptation drops to less than 12% of climate-related Overseas Development Assistance. Adaptation finance also often gets merged into broader development programmes and ends up not responding to actual adaptation needs. To avoid biases towards mitigation and large-scale infrastructure projects, there should be more funding specifically dedicated to locally-led adaptation.⁴

Extrapolating on the finance needs for adaptation declared in the Nationally Determined Commitments and National Adaptation Plans, a UNEP study estimated total adaptation finance needs may reach as much as US\$340 billion by 2030, well over ten times what is spent today.⁵ Considering how few countries even mention migration in these documents, as explained above - let alone develop plans to tackle this issue - this sum is probably a vast underestimate of what is actually needed to address adaptation, also taking migration into account.

Not only is the amount of funding too little and too late, but the great majority of this funding is also in the form of loans, both concessional and non-concessional. Concessional debt represents up to 84% in South Asia, while only 29% in Latin America and the Caribbean. The proportion of funding provided in the form of grants is very low and varies depending on regions: only 38% for Sub-Saharan Africa, 23% for Latin America and the Caribbean and between 10% and 16% for other regions.⁶

Of what is spent on adaptation through the major international climate finance mechanisms, hardly any is used for projects which explicitly address displacement. The very few projects that do address this issue seem to focus exclusively on planned relocation and resettlement, leaving support to displaced and migrating persons aside.⁷

⁴ Submission by Caritas Tonga and Caritas Australia to the Inquiry into strengthening Australia’s relationships with countries in the Pacific region. August 2020

⁵ <https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2022>

⁶ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Chapter17.pdf

⁷ https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/part_3_-_financing_instruments_and_sources_to_address_loss_and_damage_from_slow-onset_processes.pdf

4.4 Address losses and damages

In sum, at present, climate finance does not even begin to respond to the needs generated by climate displacement, let alone address the losses and damages caused. This must change. According to the “polluter pays” principle, it is only fair that industrialised societies enable the victims of the greenhouse gas emitting economic path they have chosen, to recover. And beyond recovery: to thrive. They must do so in the form of pre-emptive investments through climate finance, but also restorative payments and actions where losses and damages have been incurred or are unavoidable, and when people are displaced.

Even if, in the long run, the overall development outcomes of migration may be positive, in the short run, the need for people to change locations because a place has become uninhabitable and unproductive, causes economic and non economic losses and damages both to society and to the individuals concerned. The less people on the move and their hosts receive support, the greater the level of losses and damages incurred, a concept further developed below.

The present estimated Loss and Damage incurred is already enormous, and may keep growing depending on how seriously governments take the need to invest in mitigation and adaptation.⁸ For developing countries, Loss and Damage per year has been estimated at US\$ 290-580 billion for 2030 and could reach US\$1-1.8 trillion in 2050. It is therefore urgent to realise the creation of a Loss and Damage fund and funding arrangements as promised in 2022 at COP27.

4.5 Funds are urgently needed...

Because of the urgency, donor countries could immediately start contributing to Loss and Damage by drastically increasing the level of grants channelled to the countries in need, and affected persons, through existing climate finance mechanisms. Indeed, deciding on the ideal mechanism for Loss and Damage payments and implementing such a mechanism will take time. It’s important to realise that people on the move, at risk of moving or affected by displacement are not in a position to wait.

Another approach to Loss and Damage payments could be through debt relief or swaps. Considering the difficulty in getting wealthy countries to contribute to climate finance and the fact that, according to the IMF, ‘34 of the 59 developing economies most vulnerable to climate change are also at a high risk of fiscal crises,’⁹ this may prove a valuable complementary approach.

⁸ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-72026-5_14

⁹ <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/12/14/swapping-debt-for-climate-or-nature-pledges-can-help-fund-resilience>

7 – Papua New Guinea

Author: Sophie Jenkins and Connor McBride, Caritas Oceania

» Carteret Islands relocation: of Loss and Damage

Since 2015, Caritas had been supporting the journey of Carteret Islanders' resettlement from their atolls to the mainland in the Bougainville Region of Papua New Guinea after food sources declined due to sea level rise and erratic weather. The Bougainville government was supposed to provide food relief to the atolls each quarter but had proven unreliable.

The Carteret Islands' population of approximately 3000 people inhabited six low lying islands. The first relocation attempt occurred in 1997 when the Bougainville Administration moved 12 families from the Carteret Islands to the neighbouring island of Buka after seawater inundation led to groundwater salinisation and was threatening food production. Nevertheless, within a short time, all of the families had moved back. They had found adapting to their new environment too difficult.

While millions of dollars were spent on Environment, Conservation and Emergency Responses in the area, very little had been done for displaced people by international donors and state departments. The Carteret Islanders had been among the first to face the challenge of long-distance displacement due to rising seas from climate change. Yet there had been no compensation for the losses and damages they have experienced. While the community-based organisation Tulele Peisa had been coordinating their long-term relocation, it had not been consulted nor its views represented, in global discussions on Loss and Damage and climate-induced relocation.

In 2018, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand urged the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) Executive Committee, to be informed by face-to-face encounters with those most affected by losses and damages. The Director of Tulele Peisa, Ursula Rakova, was able to emphasise the need for more support to communities affected by the impacts of climate change whose basic needs were not covered, not even for women and children. Loss and Damage finance mechanisms need safeguards to ensure support gets to those most in need, including in remote areas.



← Papua New Guinea.

4.6 ... and need to make it to where they are sorely needed

While radically increasing the levels of funding is urgently needed, finance mechanisms also need to be improved and civil society must be vigilant to ensure funds are actually spent on protecting and supporting people on the move due to climate change. Caritas Oceania describes the dire need to enhance access to and increase participation in decision making on the use of funds by affected indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society organisations and give priority to the most vulnerable and affected people.¹⁰ Beyond participation, institutional donors should simplify and facilitate the direct access and use of funds by indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society organisations as requested by Caritas in **Bangladesh (BOX 6)** and in Oceania.

Local and national governments of host communities may be reluctant to allocate funding for projects designed to address the needs of people on the move if they don't belong to their constituency. This is especially likely to be the case if they are experiencing financial difficulties and their ability to serve their own constituency is limited.¹¹ Here, the vigilance of civil society is key.

¹⁰ <https://www.caritas.org.au/media/fjzcsu/twin-clouds-on-the-horizon-caritas-oceania-and-jubilee-australia-joint-report.pdf>
¹¹ https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_climate-dev-banks_final.pdf



↑ Flooding in Pakistan.

5

5.1. Policy and legal frameworks for internal displacement 62

5.2. Policy and legal frameworks for cross border displacement 64

Leave no one behind: apply policy and legal frameworks

The many human rights violations and losses and damages experienced by people on the move due to climate change, and observed by our Caritas national members, also point to serious gaps in the existence and implementation of policy and legal frameworks. Such frameworks are key to ensuring that planning and funding efforts effectively contribute to protecting and supporting people on the move due to climate change as well as to facilitate proactive migration and planned relocation as adaptation mechanisms to minimise displacement, where other forms of adaptation are failing.

Governments have pledged “to leave no one behind” as the overarching principle of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 (ref)¹ and have set goals to ‘facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies’ (SDG 10), and to take ‘urgent measures to fight climate change and its impact’ (SDG 13). To honour the pledge and reach these goals, a number of commonly endorsed norm setting documents could be applied to the protection and support of persons displaced due to climate change, which are among the most “left behind” populations in the world of today, as witnessed by our Caritas national members.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) explicitly recognises the need to address displacement due to climate change through its commitments on adaptation to climate change, under international environmental law. In this spirit, the 2010 UNFCCC Cancun Adaptation Framework² is the first document to officially recognise ‘migration, displacement and planned relocation’ as needing action. The 2015 Paris Agreement, endorsed by 196 countries,³ later reinforced this recognition by mentioning obligations towards the human rights of migrants and persons in vulnerable situations, the need to address displacement and to

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

² Paragraph 14 in <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

³ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf>

5.1 Policy and legal frameworks for internal displacement

set goals to enhance adaptation. A Task Force on Displacement (TFD) was then created under the UNFCCC umbrella with a mandate to 'make recommendations [...] to address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change'⁴ and offers a space for civil society to participate. Nevertheless, its merit mostly lies in keeping the issue of displacement on the agenda of the UNFCCC, and its impact has so far been limited.⁵

The vast majority of people on the move due to climate change remain within the borders of their own country. As such, they fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of their state of residence or nationality, which has the duty to provide adequate protection.

Over the past thirty years much effort has been invested in developing normative and legal frameworks at the global, regional and national levels to protect persons in a situation of internal displacement including due to the impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, on the ground, as witnessed by our Caritas members, internal displacement due to climate change continues to wreak havoc and deepen the suffering of people.

5.1.1. The Guiding Principles: not systematically applied

In 1998, the UN General Assembly adopted a non-binding instrument, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. These principles 'reflect and are consistent with international human rights law, humanitarian law'.⁶ They explicitly address needs of persons at all stages of displacement due to disasters - including climate-induced - and can be applied to both slow and sudden onset events. Based on these Principles, a number of legally binding and non-binding regional frameworks were developed, and adopted by several member states of regional organisations such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the African Union,⁷ the Organisation of American States, the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe. While numerous states have incorporated the principles in their national laws, albeit to varying degrees, they mostly remain to be implemented.

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/WIMExCom/TFD>

⁵ https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/downloads/fachpublikationen/analyse/Addressing_the_Protection_Gap.pdf

⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html>

⁷ The Kampala Convention, a legally binding document https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-kampala_convention.pdf

5.1.2. Continue to advocate

A lack of political will was identified as the stumbling block for the adoption and implementation of laws and policies to protect persons internally displaced due to climate change⁸. Continued advocacy is therefore called for.

A number of processes in support of the inclusion in domestic laws and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement exist. For example, the UN Secretary General has mandated a Special Advisor⁹ to promote an Action Agenda for implementation.¹⁰ In the American region, the working group on displacement within the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework for the Northern Triangle of Central America (MIRPS) initiative, brings together all stakeholders - states, civil society, the private sector and IDPs - within a collaborative framework. In Asia, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights opens a space in which to discuss the matter.

5.1.3. Protection: a state duty

Under international human rights law, States have a responsibility for the protection of individuals and communities under their jurisdiction from any violations of human rights through their own actions and by third parties and from damages caused by foreseeable disasters. They have the primary responsibility to implement policies and laws that ensure human rights are fulfilled for persons who move internally, including through planning and implementation of physical and social infrastructure programmes.¹¹ Where abuse or harm could not be prevented, the State is under the obligation to prosecute those responsible, and to provide easy access to justice and compensation to the victims.

Even if the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are not binding, many of the principles are binding under other legal sources of

⁸ <https://internaldisplacement-panel.org/>

⁹ The United Nations Special Advisor on Internal Displacement

¹⁰ The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement https://www.un.org/en/content/action-agenda-on-internal-displacement/assets/pdf/Action-Agenda-on-Internal-Displacement_EN.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a75207-report-internal-displacement-context-slow-onset-adverse-effects>

international law. Thus, even if the State has no domestic legislation implementing the Principles, other human rights and humanitarian instruments ratified by the State, and customary international law can be invoked. In addition, some regional jurisdictions - such as the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights, the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights - admit cases brought by NGOs and human rights advocates in the form of public interest litigation, either on behalf of the victims of abuse, or in the general interest. Such litigation can provide access to justice for vulnerable persons who may lack the necessary knowledge and economic means or might be scared or in distress, to bring complaints to the courts.¹² This demanding approach¹³ can help to bring justice in specific cases where people on the move within their own country due to climate change have seen their rights violated due to government inaction. It can also serve to encourage further implementation of the Guiding Principles.

Where people suffer during and after the crossing of international borders due to climate change, as described by Caritas Members, this is mostly due to the lack of effective legal and policy frameworks for admission and stay. Where there are no sure, orderly and regular migration pathways across borders for people in this situation, great protection gaps exist.

5.2 Policy and legal frameworks for cross-border displacement

5.2.1. The international agreements challenge

5.2.1.1. The Convention on refugees: a definition issue

There is a recurrent debate on whether the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees could be used to grant asylum to persons forced to cross a border due to climate change.¹⁴ The convention defines a refugee as any person who has 'a well founded fear of being persecuted,' which cannot be applied to the situation of persons displaced by climate change, unless they can prove they are also persecuted. Therefore, in the special cases where people flee a situation where the negative impacts of climate change co-exist with conflict, violence and other forms of persecution, persons requesting asylum can be granted protection on the grounds of persecution if justified, but not of climate change, even if climate change was part of or the sole reason for fleeing. This is stated by

¹² Based on a contribution by Alessandra Mignolli from La Sapienza University

¹³ For an example where this was attempted in Colombia for IDP under other circumstances see: <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r25153.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)¹⁵ and was witnessed on the ground by Caritas in Kenya, where a senior UNHCR staff member stated that in interviews with applicants 'if drought and conflict coexist, we are not splitting hairs.'

Nevertheless, in order for the Geneva Convention to apply to all cross-border displacement due to climate change - that is, including where there is no persecution - it would be necessary to modify its definition of "refugee". Such a modification would require reopening the Geneva Convention to negotiation, which could jeopardise the hard won protection for people fleeing persecution.¹⁶ Rather, a new approach worth considering has been proposed,¹⁷ which involves developing an optional protocol to the Geneva Convention specifically to address the need to 'protect the human rights of persons displaced across international borders due to climate change.' This approach is up for debate. In the meantime, protection is urgently needed.

While protecting and supporting persons in situations of displacement is essential, the ultimate goal should be to minimise and prevent displacement through mitigation, and adaptation, including by facilitating proactive migration when all else is failing.

5.2.1.2. The Compact on Migration: selectively applied

The Global Compact for Migration (GCM),¹⁸ which explicitly recognises climate change as a driver of migration, was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2018. While non-binding, it morally commits States to promote safe and regular migration, protect migrants' human rights, recognise their contribution to sustainable development in host communities and foster their full inclusion in society, in alignment with obligations and principles under international law. The UN Network on Migration¹⁹ works with states to promote the implementation of the Compact. Nevertheless, so far - of the states which have recently volunteered information on their adoption progress - only just over a quarter even mention climate

¹⁵ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5f75f2734.html>

¹⁶ <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/blogs/lets-talk-about-climate-migrants-not-climate-refugees>

¹⁷ By the Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5334-providing-legal-options-protect-human-rights-persons-displaced>

¹⁸ <https://www.iom.int/resources/global-compact-safe-orderly-and-regular-migration/res/73/195>

¹⁹ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/about>

change.²⁰ More alarmingly, the CLAMOR network in Latin America reports observing that, rather than seeking to meet the Compact's package of objectives in a holistic manner, governments in the region have been focusing narrowly on the border management objective.

5.2.2. If not global, then build upward?

Short of managing to agree on global legally binding and comprehensive instruments to protect and support persons who move due to climate change, regional, sub-regional and bilateral and other agreements and instruments can offer some urgently needed protection and support in the meantime. While these options are not ideal they can serve to patch as many gaps as possible and hopefully lay the ground for future all-encompassing international agreements.

5.2.2.1. Regional refugee protection

In this line, two instruments, based on the Geneva Convention, were enacted by regional organisations for the protection of refugees and include 'circumstances that have seriously disturbed the public order' as reasons for granting temporary asylum. The first is the legally binding 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).²¹ The second is the non-binding 1984 Cartagena Declaration of the Organisation of American States (OAS).²² Their broad definitions could grant refugee status, under regional criteria, to persons having fled the impacts of climate change.²³

²⁰ https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/downloads/fachpublikationen/analyse/Addressing_the_Protection_Gap.pdf

²¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc1a682/bau-convention-governing-specific-aspects-refugee-problems-africa-adopted.html>

²² https://www.oas.org/dil/1984_cartagena_declaration_on_refugees.pdf

²³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made due to the adverse effects of climate change and disasters, 1 October 2020, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5f75f2734.html>

5.2.2.2. International law principles

Although international agreements currently fall short of ensuring a safe and dignified experience for all those moving across borders due to climate change, these agreements are rooted in international principles of human rights, humanitarian, refugee, environmental, and customary law. These principles have been endorsed over time by the vast majority of countries, many of which have reiterated their dedication to international law in signing agreements, even when non binding, directly or indirectly pertaining to migration. They are well presented in a OHCHR document called "Principles and Guidelines supported by practical guidance on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations". Consequently, states can be held responsible for not fulfilling their commitments to these numerous principles.²⁴

On this basis, the principle of non-refoulement, under International Human Rights Law, is of particular interest. It can be applied to persons displaced due to climate change²⁵ and is of special relevance for the regions not covered by the existing regional refugee instruments. According to *non-refoulement*, States are prohibited from returning people to places where they face a real risk of being arbitrarily deprived of life.

In 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Committee was asked to rule for the first time on a complaint by an individual, Mr Teitiota, seeking asylum from the effects of climate change.²⁶ Indeed, in 2015, Mr Teitiota saw his asylum application to New Zealand denied and was deported. He had applied on the grounds that the rise in sea level and other effects of climate change had rendered Kiribati uninhabitable for all of its residents. Mr Teitiota then filed a complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee, arguing that by deporting him, New Zealand had violated his right to life.

In its ruling, the Committee stated that countries 'may not deport individuals who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to life.' It therefore agreed that the principle of *non-refoulement* can apply to cases in which people are expelled from places where the impacts of climate change expose them to such

²⁴ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1472491?ln=en>

²⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/GlobalCompactMigration/ThePrincipleNon-RefoulementUnderInternationalHumanRightsLaw.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/01/historic-un-human-rights-case-opens-door-climate-change-asylum-claims>

risks,²⁷ thus creating a precedent to use the human rights system to address issues related to displacement due to climate change. Nevertheless, in Mr. Teitiota's specific case, the Committee determined that New Zealand's courts did not violate his right to life at the time of the facts. Indeed, it considered that, despite the serious situation in Kiribati, sufficient protection measures were put in place.

A very high threshold for meeting the violation of the right to life was therefore set by the Committee and begs the question of whether people who are at risk should have to wait until their lives are imminently threatened or whether they should receive protection earlier. As one Committee member noted, it would 'be counterintuitive to the protection of life, to wait for deaths to be very frequent and considerable in order to consider the threshold of risk as met.'²⁸ The case, nevertheless, sets new standards that could facilitate the success of future climate change-related asylum claims'.^{29,30}

5.2.2.3. Complementary pathways

Other pathways, complementary to the refugee determination process, can also help lessen the protection gap for persons in such situations. Among these, agreements for the free movement of persons between States, permit entry and stay in host countries, and allow access to services and livelihood opportunities. For example, the 2020 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Free Movement Protocol aims to facilitate the free movement of persons in the Horn of Africa.³¹ It specifically intends to address the needs of people needing to move because of the

²⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Teitiota v. New Zealand*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016 (Oct. 24, 2019), available at <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016&Lang=en>

²⁸ Individual opinion of Committee member Duncan Laki Muhumuza (dissenting), Annex 2, , *Teitiota v. New Zealand*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016 (Oct. 24, 2019).

²⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/01/historic-un-human-rights-case-opens-door-climate-change-asylum-claims>

³⁰ This section draws heavily on a contribution by Giulia Passanti from the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

³¹ The IGAD region comprises Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

intense climate change impacts in the region and is designed to increase resilience through free movement, including of workers.³²

Temporary work permits have also helped in times of crisis. For example, from 2007 to 2012 a Temporary and Circular Labour Migration agreement facilitated migration to Spain for Colombians from areas affected by floods to work in the agricultural sector for limited periods of time. While such permits can offer partial relief, support should be offered to all, not only to the most economically productive.³³

A number of other instruments and practices exist, including the Temporary Protection Status (TPS), humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors, family reunification and community sponsorship programmes.

For example, in cases of groups of persons fleeing a specific climate event, the United States of America may offer the TPS to nationals of affected countries, as it did when Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras. On the other hand, Europe still has not agreed on directives to grant the TPS in situations caused by the impact of climate change despite having endorsed the Global Compacts.³⁴ The TPS nevertheless presents a number of serious drawbacks, among which its temporary nature, the fact that the beneficiary must already have entered the country for it to be applied and that it does not open a door to family reunification.³⁵

Another example, worth mentioning and following, is the environmental humanitarian visa programme recently launched by Argentina,³⁶ which opens the possibility for persons from the region to immigrate to Argentina including due to climate change.

³² Protocol On Free Movement Of Persons In The Igad Region, Khartoum, 26th February 2020. See also Platform on Disaster Displacement, The new pact paves the way for innovative solutions to disaster and climate change displacement in Africa, available at <https://disasterdisplacement.org/staff-member/new-pact-paves-way-for-innovative-solutions-to-disaster-and-climate-change-displacement-in-africa>

³³ <http://labos.ulg.ac.be/hugo/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2017/11/The-State-of-Environmental-Migration-2011-25-34.pdf>

³⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en

³⁵ CJIL input: https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2022/call-inputs-report-addressing-human-rights-implications-climate-change#_ftn1

³⁶ <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/infoleg/disp891.pdf>

While in practice all of these complementary pathways can play a central role in addressing a crisis, explicit recognition of their application to climate related cases must be made, otherwise it is left to the discretion of national authorities.³⁷ Furthermore, they do not necessarily offer protection of human rights to all who are in need, and to the same degree as global instruments would under international law. Nevertheless, with the appropriate adaptations they can serve to lessen protection gaps.³⁸

5.2.3. Hope on the horizon?

In conclusion, obtaining protection for persons crossing borders due to climate change represents a serious challenge. Nevertheless, in a new development, two requests were submitted for Advisory Opinions on the legal obligations of States with respect to climate change and its adverse impacts, including with regards to displacement. The first request was submitted by Chile and Colombia to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights³⁹ (IACtHR), the second by the United Nations General Assembly to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).^{40 41} Finally, a similar initiative is afoot on the African continent where civil society is reaching out to state representatives for support in submitting such a request to the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights.⁴² Hopefully the resulting Advisory Opinions will help to strengthen the case for improved legal frameworks to address the challenges posed by displacement due to climate change.

³⁷ <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/implementing-the-commitments/>

³⁸ https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/downloads/fachpublikationen/analyse/Addressing_the_protection_gap_01.pdf

³⁹ <http://climatecasechart.com/non-us-case/request-for-an-advisory-opinion-on-the-scope-of-the-state-obligations-for-responding-to-the-climate-emergency/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20230412-APP-01-00-EN.pdf>

⁴¹ This resolution is the fruit of an initiative led by the State of Vanuatu which received support from a large number of States and coalitions of civil society organisations. While an Advisory Opinion of the ICJ is not binding it does “carry legal authority and moral weight”. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1135142>

⁴² <https://www.climate.columbia.edu/events/advisory-opinions-climate-change-overview>



↑ Empty bottom of a basin that used to be a watering hole for a community of about 30 families: effects of the drought in Ethiopia.

8 – Djibouti

Author: Sara Ben Rached, Caritas Somalia and Djibouti

» The many who take refuge and in transit

The Republic of Djibouti, a very small state in the Horn of Africa, borders Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Red Sea. It has a long tradition of receiving refugees and migrants, which are hosted in urban areas and in refugee camps.

Djibouti is an important transit point for people from the region migrating on the “Eastern Route”. They mainly come from Ethiopia and Somalia which, among other issues, suffer increasingly from climate change impacts: drought, flooding and even locusts. They traverse desert areas to reach the port city of Obock with the help of “passeurs”, individuals operating at the edge of legality who facilitate the passage of these people through various regions. From Obock they embark to cross the Gulf of Aden in the hope that they will eventually reach Yemen and then travel on to Saudi Arabia in search of jobs.

In 2020, an estimated 112,000 people on the move - equivalent to roughly 10% of the country's total population - were identified at the various entry points into the country. Migrants using the “Eastern Route” are mostly adult men (68%), followed by women (21%), boys (9%) and girls (2%). A great concern is that almost half of the children are unaccompanied.

» Trying to reach Saudi Arabia: the risks

The “Eastern route” journey is always difficult and often fatal. Those who embark on it have to cope with a shortage of water and food supplies and face adverse weather conditions due to high temperatures or torrential rain. The inhumane conditions under which these journeys are undertaken leave migrants all too often at the mercy of unscrupulous individuals who expose them to numerous human rights violations, such as physical assault, torture, sexual abuse and human trafficking. Some are also victims of shipwrecks.

A large population of migrants is stranded in Djibouti. They account for 13% of the total population and live in overpopulated sites in the capital. Their living conditions are indecent. They lack access to basic services and are exposed to numerous risks and inter-ethnic tensions. In order to continue on with their journey to the Arabian Peninsula some seek temporary work. They are exploited by their employers. Not only is the work often menial and underpaid. The host population has the perception that migrants are “stealing” their work. This generates a “war between the poor”.

» Unaccompanied minors in Djibouti: addressing their many needs

Ten percent of migrants passing through Djibouti live below the poverty line and need assistance. Most of them are children, from Ethiopia, living on the streets of the capital city.^I

Caritas Djibouti has an agreement with the Government for the protection of vulnerable children and with IOM to provide sustainable solutions to the problems of refugees, migrants and host populations in general. This is done in the context of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the commitments made by the Government of Djibouti in these areas.



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↑ Families affected by drought in Somalia make their way to the camps of Baidoa.

Caritas Djibouti seeks to reduce the vulnerability of unaccompanied migrant children through a number of actions. As a result of their precarious situation, they are constantly exposed to physical and psychological violence, prostitution and drug use. An overnight shelter offers the children the opportunity to stay away from the streets during the most risky hours. They are given access to basic services: showers, clean clothes, meals, free medical care. They are also taught basic literacy, handicraft skills, and Djibouti's official language, which is key to social inclusion. In addition, Caritas devotes much effort providing psychosocial support and raising awareness on human rights, and on the risks of irregular migration, of drugs and HIV.

Finally, Caritas also seeks to reintegrate each child into their family of origin. This begins with the painstaking work of tracing families, mostly in Ethiopia, together with IOM and UNICEF, as was done for Miriam, whose story illustrates the drama endured by the many who are displaced, including by climate change.

“ Little Miriam, a 5-year-old girl was received at Caritas after surviving a shipwreck in which her mother and brother drowned. Of Ethiopian origin, she was born in Yemen. Her mother had emigrated there pregnant. The girl's father remained in Ethiopia after being expelled from Saudi Arabia. Her mother had decided to go to Djibouti with her two children to find work. ”

» Policy frameworks: a good start

In 2021, a national migration strategy was presented by the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior to strengthen migration governance and its role as a vector for the country's development.^{II} This strategy aims to contribute to the effective management of migration in accordance with national legislative instruments and international commitments to which the Republic of Djibouti is a signatory State.

Fully implemented, this strategy, instruments and commitments have the potential to contribute to restoring dignity to the many people on the move, including due to the impacts of climate change.

^I https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336720569_Etude_sur_les_enfants_en_situation_de_rue_dans_la_ville_de_Djibouti

^{II} <https://www.iom.int/news/djiboutis-first-national-strategy-migration-targets-challenges-horn-africa>

The cost of inaction: losses and damages

Displacement due to climate change is already affecting millions of people and is set to grow as habitability and livelihoods decline due to the changes in climate. However, policy responses to this displacement have so far focused much more on addressing its drivers, as opposed to policies to ensure safe and dignified means of migration, which are more urgently needed than ever. Furthermore, most focus on internal, rather than cross-border, displacement. Too much suffering is caused by these gaps in international climate action.¹

When governments are unable or unwilling to plan and invest - individually and collectively - in mitigation as well as in adaptation, including in proactive, safe, regular and orderly migration from areas at high risk of forced displacement, in addition to protecting and supporting persons forced to move, then many human rights violations and associated high losses and damages are likely to be incurred. Drawing on the testimonies of Caritas Members, **TABLE 1** enumerates the many economic and non economic losses and damages persons forced to move due to climate change may be left to bear when they have no support or protection. It also describes the losses and damages potentially born by host communities due to the impact of the unsupported and unplanned arrival of persons seeking shelter, access to services and assistance, and economic opportunities. Finally, the table describes how losses and damages can be felt at the sub-national and national level and also across borders as when a displaced population is unable to work and produce, and therefore contribute to the economy, yet has basic needs which need to be covered, as described by Caritas in Somalia, or when the rise of xenophobia causes tensions and when conflict arises as a result of population movements as discussed earlier.

At the other end of the spectrum, if governments invest in mitigation and adaptation, including fully enabling and supporting proactive migration that is safe, regular and orderly as a pre-emptive adaptation response, then

¹ <https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/implementing-the-commitments/>

↓ TABLE 1
Relative levels of losses and damages incurred by different stakeholders under the worst case scenario, where displacement is completely unsupported, and under the ideal case scenario, where proactive migration receives full and perfect support.

Affected Population	Category	Description	Relative Levels of Losses and Damages	
			Displacement with NO Support	Proactive, Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration of Individuals or Whole Communities with FULL Support
People Moving	Economic Losses and Damages	Devaluation of fixed assets	HIGH	HIGH
		Loss of assets	HIGH	LOWER
		Loss of income	HIGH	LOWER
		Relocation and resettlement expenses	HIGH	LOWER
		Livelihood capacity / Professional ability ill adapted to new social, economic and environmental situation	HIGH	LOWER
		Reduced access to productive resources, food and water adequate housing and health, education and other services	HIGH	LOWER
	Non-Economic Losses and Damages	Emotional trauma from leaving place of usual residence and belongings, and due to relationship, identity, cultural, local knowledge and spiritual losses	HIGH	HIGH
		Trauma from destruction of place of usual residence	HIGH	HIGH
		Trauma from physical harm to people by climate impacts	HIGH	LOWER
		Trauma from abuse, trafficking, exploitation, discrimination, violence	HIGH	LOWER
		Interrupted schooling*	HIGH	LOWER
		Physical health loss / Decreased life expectancy / Developmental damage to children	HIGH	LOWER
		Reduced access to political representation	HIGH	LOWER
Host Community	Economic Losses and Damages	Pressure / Collapse of social and physical infrastructure	HIGH	LOWER
		Competition for resources and jobs	HIGH	LOWER
	Non-Economic Losses and Damages	Environmental degradation due to increased pressure*	HIGH	LOWER
International/ National/ Sub-national Community	Economic Losses and Damages	Loss of production and income / Food insecurity	HIGH	LOWER
	Non-Economic Losses and Damages	Xenophobia	HIGH	LOWER
		Security Issues / Conflict	HIGH	LOWER

Source: Author's conceptualization

* Also an economic loss and damage

↓ TABLE 2
Possible restorative financing and actions for losses and damages to displaced persons, which remain high even in the case of fully supported and proactive migration.²

	Loss and Damages	Restorative Financing and Action
Economic	Devaluation of fixed assets	Direct payments
Non-Economic	Emotional trauma from leaving place of usual residence, including leaving belongings, relationships, and cultural and spiritual losses.	Culturally appropriate recognition and repair of loss (whether or not with financial compensation)
		Enabling access / safe visits to abandoned sites
		Traditional rituals
		Active remembrance (e.g. museum exhibitions, school curricula)
	Emotional trauma from destruction of place of usual residence.	Counselling

human rights can be protected and associated losses and damages can be minimised, as described in TABLE 1. This best case scenario, where human rights are respected, can be obtained, or at least approached, with the appropriate planning and investments in social and physical infrastructure and the adoption and enforcement of comprehensive policy and legal frameworks. In this ideal situation, legal pathways exist and people receive support to move freely in anticipation of, or in response to, adverse impacts of climate change and to fully integrate into a host community which has been prepared to welcome them, whether in the same country or a neighbouring one.

TABLE 1 shows that it is in the interest of all stakeholders to avoid situations of forced and unsupported displacement through mitigation and adaptation. Losses and damages and associated human rights violations can be minimised not only through preparedness but also by enabling proactive migration to become as safe, regular and orderly as possible and a less traumatic adaptation mechanism, potentially leading to positive development outcomes.

TABLE 1 also shows that fully supported proactive migration due to climate change still implies losses and damages which potentially remain high, no matter what. These can, and must, be addressed as best possible through various types of financial and non-financial restorative actions, as described in TABLE 2 and in BOX 9.

While these actions are of the utmost importance, one should realise that, as good as they are, non-economic losses and damages often can never be fully remedied. This highlights a situation where persons bear the dire consequences of a situation they did not cause and therefore the great responsibility of State leaders to take climate action.

² Adapted from <https://www.sei.org/publications/fair-feasible-loss-and-damage-finance-mechanism/>

9 – Traditional approaches to addressing losses and damage

Authors: Fr Pio Wacussanga S.J., Associação Construindo Comunidades in Lubango and Ame Naame Omuno, in Cunene

In rural communities conflicts are resolved, often successfully, by local leaders. Traditional community justice is restorative. Instead of punishing the acts, it seeks the recovery of both offender and victim and to restore community harmony. Caritas Angola believes this approach has great value to help address some losses and damages communities displaced by climate change have suffered. For example, where indigenous groups and ethnic minorities have been displaced, or community resources have been damaged, or to recover places of collective memory, such as ancestral cemeteries.

Restorative justice can help communities to recover from their collective losses, material and immaterial. For example, to this day, a wound remains open in the hearts of the Angolan Herero community following a massacre that took place as far back as 1940. The descendants are demanding that the violence be acknowledged and that the sites of the massacres and graves be preserved. Communal harmony will not return until traditional ceremonies take place and until these minorities are recognised and protected.



↑ Community focus group discussion facilitated by Associação Construindo Comunidades in Lubango, Angola.

To conclude: time to face reality and take action

In its last report, the IPCC, for the first time, was unequivocal regarding the fact that climate change has become a major driver of migration and that unsupported displacement is to be avoided. The summary states that 'policy interventions can remove barriers and expand the alternatives for safe, orderly and regular migration that allows vulnerable people to adapt to climate change.'¹ Nevertheless, this notion did not make it all the way into the summary for policymakers, a negotiated document designed to inform those who have the most decision making power.^{2,3} It was swept under the rug.

Policy makers need to realise they have a responsibility not to just let displacement due to climate change happen. Movements of persons fleeing the impacts of climate change come with high social, economic and political costs - and make attaining the Sustainable Development Goals even more difficult.⁴ Not only must governments become more serious about mitigation and adaptation. They must also appreciate the value of supporting proactive migration which is safe, orderly and regular as possible as an adaptation response to climate change to minimise the human rights violations and losses and damages from haphazard displacement. Further, they must recognise the need to fully address losses and damages when they could not be avoided. In other words, the evidence points to an urgent need to take action and reassess priorities in welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating all persons displaced due to climate change.

1 https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf

2 https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

3 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/heres-what-new-ipcc-report-says-climate-driven-alex-randall/>

4 <https://desapublications.un.org/working-papers/economic-and-political-costs-population-displacement-and-their-impact-sdgs-and>

Terminology¹

Migration

Movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. Encompasses **any kind of movement** of people, whatever its length, composition and causes.

Displacement ²	Proactive Migration	Planned Relocation
The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, whether within their own country or across an international border.	The movement of persons who have decided to move based on an anticipatory risk assessment and some planning ³ .	Typically initiated, supervised and implemented by the state or institutions , from national to local level, and involves small communities and individual assets but may also involve large populations.

This study considers **all movements** of persons due to the impacts of **climate change** to be forms of **displacement**.⁴

Effects of Climate Change on the Environment

Slow Onset Events	Sudden Onset Events
Evolve gradually over years due to incremental changes or an increased frequency or intensity of recurring weather events.	Discrete events which occur in a matter of hours or days.
Include increasing temperatures, desertification, loss of biodiversity, land and forest degradation, glacial retreat and related impacts, ocean acidification, sea level rise and salinisation.	Typically refer to extreme weather events such as storms, floods, king tides, landslides, heat waves and wildfires.

¹ Except where specified, adapted from: <https://apps.ipcc.ch/glossary/> and https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_Annex-II.pdf

² Adapted from: <https://www.unhcr.org/glossary>

³ Adapted from: https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2023-01/FTF1537_USAID_Climate%20Migration%20Strategy_012723.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5334-providing-legal-options-protect-human-rights-persons-displaced>



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↑ Turkana, in northern Kenya hit by a massive drought and worsened by the effects of El Nino.

Human Response to Climate Impacts

Vulnerability	Resilience
The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.	The capacity to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for adaptation, learning and/or transformation.
Example Coastal communities on low lying land are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise.	Example Communities who have implemented early warning systems will cope better with storms.

Measures Taken in Response to Climate Change

Mitigation	Adaptation
A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gasses.	The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
Examples Insulating houses or preventing deforestation.	Examples Switching to planting drought resistant crops or planting trees to reduce the heat.

Losses and Damages

The harm from observed impacts and projected risks of climate change.
(N.B: Loss and Damage, with capital letters, refers to the political debate concerning this matter)

Economic	Non-Economic
Harm to which we can assign a monetary value.	Harm to which it is difficult or infeasible to assign a monetary value.
Examples The costs of rebuilding infrastructure that has been damaged due to a flood, or the loss of revenue from agricultural crops that were destroyed due to drought.	Examples Trauma from experiencing a tropical cyclone, loss of community cohesion due to displacement of people, or loss of biodiversity.



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Methodology

In a preliminary study, in the spring of 2021, Caritas Member Organisations were asked to share their observations and evidence of displacement due to environmental degradation and climate change in the country or region covered by their group. They responded to a letter with open ended questions on: the causes and mechanisms of displacement; the protection needs of people and how Caritas tries to address these needs; existing legal instruments and protection policies.

This study, more closely focused on climate change and the predicament of people once they are displaced, is based on these testimonies. The materials used for this study were those collected from Caritas Member Organisations covering:

Whole regions

Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania and Southern Africa.

Specific countries

Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Djibouti, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

The testimonies were thematically analysed following a grounded theory approach¹ to identify salient themes and the relationship between them. After an initial open coding stage, key issues emerged from the testimony texts that were then related to each and further condensed to core themes. The core themes are discussed in this report in the context of the literature, and were further developed through informal exchanges with relevant stakeholders and experts on the topic of policy making to address displacement due to climate change in Geneva.



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↑ Locals in the village of Kalele in Kenya's Eastern Province gather water from a hand dug well located at the site of a large dam built in 2008 by Caritas Kenya.

1 http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Glaser_1967.pdf

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↑ Refugees are assisted by an interpreter as they arrive at a transit camp in Idomeni, Greece, on the border of Macedonia.

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↑ The Sahel zone in Chad. A hard soil and lack of rain make it gruelling to till the field. The danger of famine seems imminent.



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Cover: Domo Hamani (left) and her one-year-old granddaughter Hajara Hama make the day-long return journey home to Luga from a Caritas Niger (CADEV) feeding centre in Saga.
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