

ELIN JAKOBSSON AND
RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF SWEDEN

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

POLICY APPROACHES FOR
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Edited by Hedvig Heijne



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About the publisher

European Liberal Forum

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the foundation of the European Liberal Democrats, the ALDE party. A core aspect of our work consists in issuing publications on liberalism and European public policy issues. We also provide a space for the discussion of European politics and offer training for liberal-minded citizens. Our aim is to promote active citizenship in all of this. Our foundation is made up of several European think tanks, political foundations and institutes. We work throughout Europe, as well as in the EU Neighborhood countries. The youthful and dynamic nature of ELF allows us to be at the forefront in promoting active citizenship, getting citizens involved with European issues, and building an open, Liberal Europe.

FORES

The Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (Fores) is an independent think tank dedicated to furthering entrepreneurship and sustainable development through liberal solutions to meet the challenges and possibilities brought on by globalization and global warming. The principal activities of Fores are to initiate research projects and public debates that result in concrete reform proposals in relevant policy areas, such as environmental policy, migration, entrepreneurship, economic policy and the digital society.

About the authors

Elin Jakobsson, PhD, is a research fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and a teacher in International Relations at the Department of Economic History and International Relations at Stockholm University. Elin's research concerns international norm dynamics, climate-induced migration, societal security norms, disaster risk reduction and global migration governance. Her doctoral dissertation investigated the political developments regarding climate change and migration, and she has written several reports and book chapters on the subject. Elin is also frequently invited as a panelist and lecturer on issues concerning climate-driven migration, as well as on global governance on migration and refugees more generally.

Research Institute of Sweden

RISE is Sweden's research institute and innovation partner. Through international collaboration programmes with industry, academia and the public sector, RISE contributes to a sustainable society by engaging its 2,700 employees in all types of research and innovation processes. One example of this is the EU project IMPROVER, whose overall objective is to improve European critical infrastructure resilience to crises and disasters. RISE is an independent, state-owned research institute, which offers unique expertise and over 100 testbeds and demonstration environments for future-proof technologies, products and services.

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Fredrik von Matérn (MSc) is a political scientist within the fields of Environmental Social Science and Asian Studies. He was part of the RISE Junior Field Officer programme in China during the writing of this book and has previously been part of the team at Fores.

List of Abbreviations

ARC	African Risk Capacity
AAL	Average Annual Loss
BCCRF	Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
COP	Conference of the Parties
CLIMA	Department for Climate Action
DEVCO	Department for Development Cooperation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EACH-FOR	Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
HOME	Department for Home Affairs
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PA	Paris Agreement
PDD	Platform for Disaster Displacement
RPM	Resilience Pathways Model
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TFD	Task Force on Displacement
UN	United Nations
UNISDR	The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOPS	United Nations Operational and Project Services
WEF	World Economic Forum

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Introduction

Time to act on the reality of climate-driven migration

“Climate change is one of the root causes of a new migration phenomenon. Climate refugees will become a new challenge – if we do not act swiftly.”

- Jean Claude Juncker, 2015 State of the Union speech¹

Climate change, in terms of both scale and potential impact, is a reality that threatens the most basic human needs, from food and water to human settlement patterns. While it is difficult to establish a direct causal link between climate change and migration, one of the major consequences of the changing environment will be on people’s livelihood. Sudden or progressive changes to the environment, such as rising sea levels, water scarcity, decrease in crop yields and an increase in extreme weather events will have an effect on people’s lives and living conditions. When people can no longer gain a secure livelihood, migration may be the only option.

In 1990 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) wrote that the “greatest impact of climate change could be on human migration”.² In the IPCC special report from 2018 researchers predict that if global warming increases by 2°C, we will see increased levels of food

¹ Juncker (2015).

² Brown (2007).

insecurity, water shortages, extreme poverty and displacement.³ Since migration is multicausal, the future scope of climate-driven migration is difficult to predict. However, human displacement linked to climate change is not only a theoretical future, but a current reality. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) extreme weather events, such as floods, storms and wildfires forcibly displaced 17.2 million people in 2018.⁴

It is clear that changing weather, climate and environmental conditions could each be the crucial determinant factor in the choice to migrate. Understanding the connection between climate change and migration is essential for planning and preparing for this challenge. Otherwise, climate-driven migration constitutes a risk of becoming the human face of climate change.

The idea of climate-driven migration has been in the public discourse since 1985, when Essam El-Hinnawi, the United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) expert, defined environmental refugees as:

*“...those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life”.*⁵

Ever since then, considerable interest has been shown in the issue of climate change and migration by governments, civil society and the international community. However, the response to this challenge has been limited and to date protection for those affected is lacking. Legally speaking, we do not know how to define people displaced by climate change within the current legal frameworks, as they are neither recognised by international law nor protected by the international community.

At the time of writing this report, the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg addressed the UN Climate Action Summit, calling on the

³ IPCC (2018).

⁴ NRC/IDMC (2019).

⁵ El-Hinnawi (1985).

leaders of the world to take immediate action to tackle climate change.⁶ Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have walked out of schools and workplaces in the biggest climate protests in history.⁷ This mobilisation of youth has led to an unprecedented interest in climate change issues. At the same time, the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has set a fundamental goal to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050, pledging the battle to fight climate change as one of her top priorities in the coming years.⁸ The European Union (EU) has been at the forefront of international efforts to fight climate change, being the first major economy to implement a legally binding framework to put concrete action behind its Paris Agreement (PA) commitments.⁹ With Ursula von der Leyen's ambitious commitment to counter climate change, and the European citizens' overwhelming support for action to fight climate change, a window of opportunity might have opened up. If the EU wants to continue to be the leader in the global fight against climate change, now is the time to step up its efforts by taking concrete action on the human mobility challenges associated with climate change.

As with war and violence, climate change deprives people of their freedom. As liberals, we champion the freedom, dignity and wellbeing of all individuals, who should be given the choice to build a dignified life at home and elsewhere. Throughout history, liberals have paved the way for the development of society, through international cooperation and technological innovations. Guided by liberal values, such as freedom and human dignity, liberals have managed to address complex challenges like this before. Liberals in the EU should rise to the challenge and once again be at the forefront of developing holistic and sustainable solutions to meet the reality of climate change and migration – creating solutions where freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility and respect for others.

6 UN News (2019).

7 The Guardian (2019).

8 Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 (2019).

9 European Commission (2019).

In Fores' previous publication, *Climate refugees – the science, the people, the jurisdiction and the future*, the authors **Emine Behiye Karakitapoglu**, **Markus Larsson** and **Adam Reuben** examined the most important aspects of climate migration issues, identifying the significance and magnitude of possible climate migration flows.

With this publication, we wish to once again highlight the issue of climate-driven migration, but this time looking more closely at the possible ways forward. This publication therefore contains two reports examining the issue from two perspectives; 1) the politics of climate change and migration and 2) how the EU can tackle climate-driven migration through resilience and adaptation. This time we wanted to examine how the international community and the EU have dealt with the issue and why we have not yet found adequate measures to respond to, and prepare for, the challenge. What are the policies needed to address the diverse and wide scope of the phenomena? The publication further looks at how the EU and its member states can make use of already existing frameworks, for example the 2030 Agenda, in order to support communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With this publication we hope to stimulate debate, raise awareness and inspire European policymakers to take action in addressing climate-driven migration.

In the first report, **Elin Jakobsson**, research fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, examines the legal dilemma of climate-driven migration and the role that international actors play in the politics of climate change and migration. She also takes a closer look at the different factors influencing the current policy developments on the issue. The report proposes a set of policy recommendations aimed at actors within the EU policymaking arena, as well as at an international level, in order to better address the issue of climate-driven migration.

Knowing that climate change will affect regions differently and that the adaptive capacities and disaster resilience of countries differ, we must support and increase resilience in countries that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In view of the fact that we need to act swiftly, the second report examines how we can mitigate the need for

migration by building sustainable and resilient societies. This report is written by **Sten Stenbeck**, **Kerstin Eriksson** and **Fredrik von Matérn**, of the Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE).

Climate change and migration poses a fundamental challenge to existing societal, economical and governmental concepts in our society. It is a reality that requires a vision, values and action. The solutions that lie ahead should be guided by our liberal values: freedom and human dignity. As the world changes, the EU needs to lead. With the new European Parliament in place, the European citizens' support for climate action, and the new Commission's ambitious climate change goals, the EU stands at a crossroads. The EU should seize this opportunity to think, plan and develop a holistic and sustainable approach for the future. The EU has the possibility of becoming the leading international force in addressing climate-driven migration.

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The politics of climate change and migration

By Elin Jakobsson

After Cyclone Aila hit Bangladesh in May 2009, approximately 2 million people were forced to leave their homes. The main reasons for the displacement were the severe damage to people's homes and cultivable lands, the loss of working opportunities, and the scarcity in water and food. The resulting displacement flows were directed towards the nearest towns in the initial phase, but later phases also showed subsequent migration to larger urban areas and cross-border mobility to India.¹⁰



In 2013, the asylum application of Ioane Teitiota, a citizen of the Pacific island nation of Kiribati, was tried in New Zealand. The basis for the claim for protection was that sea level rise associated with climate change had negatively affected the living environment in Kiribati. The claim was rejected, mainly because the adverse effects of climate change could not be considered to fit within the scope of the Refugee Convention.¹¹ Nev-

¹⁰ Islam and Hasan (2016).

¹¹ Buchanan (2015).

ertheless, the case has gained great traction as a symbol for the “climate refugee” debate and for the unique and puzzling case that the “sinking” of small island developing states poses to the international community and to international law on protection, migration and human rights.



In the spring of 2019, rain had not fallen for over a year in the county of Turkana, northwest Kenya. As livestock started to die, many inhabitants left their villages in search of water and pastures for the animals they had left – and food scarcity remains a great threat for anyone who has stayed behind.¹²



A glance at these cases reflects how the adverse effects of climate change can drastically change living conditions in many parts of the world. As this report will show, these changes interact with migration and displacement in different ways. Climate-driven migration poses many challenges to the policy processes at international, European, and national levels, especially as there are severe legal gaps in the protection of these groups.

This report provides the reader with the key features of climate-driven migration as a phenomenon, and the policy processes which surround it, and proposes a set of recommendations specifically aimed at policy makers in the EU to address migration and displacement caused by climate change. As such, it is a stepping stone from which further policy making studies, or a general interest in the issue, can be pursued. The report provides the reader with three things. First, gives an overview of the phenomenon of climate-driven migration as such, and highlights the complexities and difficulties involved in gaining a comprehensive understanding of this issue. Second, it highlights obstacles and opportunities that have arisen in the process so far, which will help to identify possible

¹² Rädda Barnen Dokumentär (2019).

explanations for why the developments in climate change and migration have unfolded in the way they have. Thirdly, based on this discussion, it proposes a set of policy recommendations aimed at aiding policy makers within the EU to better address protection issues in relation to climate-driven migration. The recommendations can also be of use to actors at the national and international level, which should also start to consider appropriate measures to address migration driven by climate change.

1. Patterns hard to grasp

What is climate-driven migration? Who are climate migrants? These seemingly simple questions take us directly to the heart of the debate on climate-driven migration. Instances of climate-driven migration can be extremely diverse, as has been illustrated by the examples above. Therefore, trying to define the exact scope and causal relationships of this phenomenon is, as we shall see, highly complex and has presented the relevant policymakers with a clear challenge.

Climate-driven migration concerns migration patterns that are induced by environmental degradation or natural catastrophes of some kind.¹³ Huge numbers of people are displaced every year as a result of different kinds of natural disaster. According to estimates from the IDMC, 17.2 million people were newly displaced in 2018, due to different kinds of natural disaster. This can be compared to the figure of 10.8 million displaced due to conflict or violence in the same year.¹⁴ The IDMC estimates that on average, 24 million people have been displaced each year since 2008, as a result of different kinds of natural disaster.¹⁵ These mod-

¹³ Not all environmental degradation or natural catastrophes are induced by climate change – the definitional implications of this distinction are addressed below.

¹⁴ IDMC (2019b). The IDMC measures displacement both from geophysical disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, and from weather-related disasters such as floods, storms, wildfires, landslides and extreme temperatures. Since 2017, the data has also been measuring displacement from drought. However, such displacement is difficult to measure and the IDMC notes that these figures (764,000 in 2018) are clear underestimates.

¹⁵ IDMC (2019a).

els measure internal displacement, and internal displacement will surely continue to account for the major part of climate-driven migration.¹⁶ Nevertheless, a portion of these displaced people might cross international borders if they cannot return to their homes. The numbers of cross-border people who are displaced can therefore be expected to increase, given the expectation that the overall number of those displaced from climate change will increase in the future.

1.1 Definitions, concepts and diversities

There is no coherent and unified definition of what climate-driven migration is. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has formulated a “working definition”, which is commonly used as an entry point to understand the phenomenon:

“Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.”¹⁷

Climate-driven migration is thus an utterly diverse phenomenon. It covers extremely different types of movements, such as planned evacuation before a typhoon in the Philippines;¹⁸ searching for shelter after a hurricane in the Bahamas;¹⁹ emergency evacuation and flight in relation to Californian wild fires;²⁰ recurrent droughts in Senegal, which force farmers to migrate to find alternative sources of income;²¹ flooding in the Philippines, which spurs migrants to the larger cities, in search for jobs to

16 Rigaud et al., (2018).

17 IOM (2009).

18 IDMC (2019b).

19 Röda korset (2019).

20 Shalby et al., (2019).

21 Schöfberger (2018).

compensate for lost crops;²² or an entire Alaskan village, which is set to gradually relocate to a new spot.²³

These real-life examples illustrate how climate-driven migration varies along different intertwined spectra. Migration and displacement can be spurred from both sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters. Sudden-onset disasters are events that unfold rapidly and are often unexpected. Such disasters can be floods, storms or earthquakes. Slow-onset disasters have a gradual development and can therefore often be detected as they emerge. Nevertheless, the severity of the changes is not always acknowledged in time for adequate responses. Such events are, for instance, drought or sea level rise. Migration and displacement from different kinds of disasters are, as will be further discussed below, often intertwined with other drivers of migration. Economic and work migration are often related, as different kinds of disaster affect people's potential to maintain their work and livelihood. Another example is displacement from conflict, connected to the reduction of resources (food, water or land, for instance) that the disasters may cause. The displacement or migration may be permanent or temporary, and it can be internal or cross international borders. A final aspect, and one that poses particular difficulties in terms of the climate-driven migrants' right to protection, is that the migration can be both voluntary (or at least, planned) and forced. Most often, it is somewhere in between.

In addition to these variations, different key concepts used in these discussions may come with different connotations. For instance, using the word "climate migration" or "climate-change migration", instead of "environmental migration", clearly links the issue to the discourse and negotiations on climate change. While this is helpful, as climate change is a top issue on the policy agenda, and also highly relevant, given the impact that climate change consequences have on these types of mobility, there are also reasons for why some prefer to use the term "environmental migration" instead. Climate change as a policy issue is still politically sensitive in many ways, and connections between these types of mobility

²² McNamara et al., (2017).

²³ Welch (2019).

and climate change implicitly suggest that the countries more responsible for global warming are also more responsible for protecting people fleeing from its consequences.²⁴ In addition, “environmental migration” can be viewed as more inclusive, since it can include migration from all types of environmental degradation and all types of disaster. The logic underpinning this argument is that people move because of the changes in the environment – no matter whether these changes are direct consequences of climate change or not. Also, some disasters that have strong impacts on displacement, such as earthquakes and volcano eruptions, do not have the same causal connections to climate change, but still need to be addressed in a similar way from a policy perspective.

Another conceptual aspect that complicates things is whether the displaced people can be referred to as “refugees”. Most actors and scholars agree that the term “climate refugee” is inaccurate. The most obvious reason for this is that climate change or environmental degradation are not among the specific reasons for persecution which, according to the 1951 Refugee Convention, qualify for refugee status. According to the convention, a person eligible for refugee status is someone who:

*“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”*²⁵

In addition to the fact that climate or environmental factors are clearly not among the *reasons* mentioned, it has been pointed out that environmental degradation cannot be considered an actor of *persecution* and that most environmentally displaced people are not unwilling or unable to avail themselves of *their country’s protection* (at least not as is intended in the Refugee Convention).²⁶ On the other hand, the United Nations

²⁴ Jakobsson (2018a).

²⁵ United Nations (1951).

²⁶ See for example McAdam (2012).

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recognized that some movements of this kind could fall under their work and mandate,²⁷ and that they can be considered as “people in refugee-like situations”,²⁸ even though they are not actually refugees in a legal sense. Nevertheless, most actors prefer to use the term “displaced” or “migrants”, rather than “refugees”, when referring to climate-driven migration of various types.

As mentioned above, climate-driven migration patterns are often strongly interlinked with other types of migratory processes, such as conflict, economic/work migration and urbanization, which further complicate matters.²⁹ Moreover, it should not be forgotten that while the concept of migration and displacement can be an extreme measure, it is also a “privilege” in some situations.³⁰ This means that the potential to adapt to environmental degradations through migration, especially in the context of slow-onset disasters, is dependent on a certain resource level.³¹ The absolutely poorest and most vulnerable people run the risk of becoming trapped in dangerous areas.³²

This report has taken into account all the definitional aspects discussed above and, in the absence of a unified concept, it focuses on the phenomenon of “climate-driven migration”. The word “climate” (instead of environmental) has been used to clearly link the recommendations and implications to a larger discussion on the EU’s response to the consequences of climate change. The word “migration” (instead of displacement) has a broader meaning and encompasses both planned and forced movements. However, in terms of data and documentation, the report uses material that employs a range of concepts and definitions, in order to give justice to the broader debate on these matters. This means that the report has a broad understanding of what kinds of migration can be included in “climate-driven migration” – an understanding that corresponds largely with IOM’s working definition (see above).

²⁷ Guterres (2009).

²⁸ People in refugee-like situations are included in UNHCR statistics on the global refugee population (UNCHR 2019:63).

²⁹ See for example Ionesco et al., (2017); The Government Office for Science (2011).

³⁰ IOM (2009).

³¹ Kubik and Maurel (2016).

³² Ionesco et al., (2017); The Government Office for Science (2011).

1.2 A note on future estimates

Climate change drives migration and displacement right now, and it is likely to increasingly do so in the future. While the main part of future climate-driven migration can be expected to occur internally, cross-border, climate-driven migration can be assumed to increase, following a larger number of totally displaced people. However, to arrive at precise estimates regarding the number of future climate-driven migrants and displaced people is difficult, and many scholars agree that estimates should be considered with great caution.³³ As has been discussed, climate-driven migration is often interlinked with, for example, processes of conflict, seasonal migration, labour migration and urbanization processes. In addition, emergency evacuation and planned relocation can be considered as part of this displacement spectrum.³⁴ It will thus, at many times, be difficult to distinguish climate-driven migration from other types of migration. One problem for those trying to estimate future migration flows of this kind is that even if you can try to predict the number of specific climate-related events – given the different rises in average temperature – you will not know how many of those affected will actually migrate or be displaced; and you will not know if such displacement will be temporary or permanent.³⁵ Since migration generally requires a certain level of initial resources, it is also possible that many of those who are severely affected by disasters and environmental degradation will be trapped in dangerous situations, rather than being able to leave the area and migrate. Moreover, future climate-driven migration scenarios are dependent on the severity of climate change (i.e. whether we are capable of mitigating global warming) and the extent to which households and communities can adapt to the changes.

Estimates of the future influx of climate-driven migrants to Europe will depend on how many people will fail to find durable solutions in their own or neighbouring countries, the resources they will have to continue to use, and whether European politics facilitates or obstruct immigra-

³³ See for example Gemenne (2011b); Ionesco et al., (2017); Lutz et al., (2019).

³⁴ IDMC (2019b); Ionesco et al., (2017).

³⁵ Ionesco et al., (2017).

tion. It is not unthinkable that there will be instances of climate-driven migration and displacement from, within and between EU countries, but this type of migration is rarely considered in the research. It can possibly be assumed that – at least in the next couple of decades – there will be limited climate-driven migration from EU countries, which can be expected to have a better capacity for preemptive adaptation than the more vulnerable societies, which are expected to be severely affected by climate change. A recent report from the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre maps out future migration scenarios in the EU. The report acknowledges the potential impact of environmental degradation, environmental uncertainties and natural disasters on migration to and within the EU, but fails to give precise future estimates. Dominic Kniveton, one of the contributors, writes:

It is impossible to predict future migration outcomes as a direct response to environmental change because environmental change is never a single pressure and because we cannot know for certain how individuals and households at risk and governments will perceive and respond to such changes.³⁶

This assessment is thus in line with the conclusion of many others. In addition, the authors of the report find that, in several outlined scenarios, the EU is not necessarily the most attractive destination for migration from its neighbouring countries.³⁷

1.3 The legal gap

Nevertheless, one of the most important aspects of these migration and displacement patterns is constituted by the legal gaps often faced by these groups when displaced across international borders. In short, they are not covered by the Refugee Convention (as has been described above)

³⁶ Szczepanikova and Van Criekinge (2018).

³⁷ Szczepanikova and Van Criekinge (2018).

or adequately covered by regional arrangements, such as the EU Qualification Directive.³⁸

Some national examples exist, such as the Pacific Access Category Resident Visa, by which residents of Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga and Fiji can register for a visa ballot to go to New Zealand.³⁹ Sweden's ordinary asylum legislation was, in theory, able to grant protection to people who were unable to return to their country of origin because of environmental disasters.⁴⁰ However, this particular aspect has never been used and is not included in the temporary asylum legislation that has been functioning in Sweden since 2016. There are also some examples from around the world of ad hoc solutions in specific situations, where temporary protection has been granted based on the occurrence of specific events, such as natural disasters.⁴¹

For those who have been displaced by natural disasters and are internally displaced, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are in many ways applicable. While not constituting a binding law, the Guiding Principles are very much aligned to international human rights law and are thus a forceful instrument. The Guiding Principles ensure the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as their dignity and participation in situations involving evacuation or relocation. The principles also give IDPs certain rights to humanitarian aid.⁴² As such, the Guiding Principles do not emphasize the reason and cause of displacement, at least not as much as international protection legislation, and can thus be more easily applied to different situations, including those resulting from natural disasters of different types.

38 As well as offering protection to people who fall within the scope of the Refugee Convention, the EU Qualification Directive grants Subsidiary protection to: "a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm [...] and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country" (emphasis added). According to the Directive, serious harm consists of (a) the death penalty or execution; (b) torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of an applicant in the country of origin; or (c) serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person, by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. Against this background, it also becomes clear that climate change or environmental degradation are not considered as serious harm, as intended in the EU Qualification Directive, and that those who are displaced from climate-related factors cannot qualify for subsidiary protection.

39 New Zealand Immigration (2019).

40 Utlänningslag 2005:716 2005. Ch. 4, 2 a § 2 p.

41 McAdam (2012). For an extensive assessment of the applicability of existing legal frameworks, see McAdam (2012); Kälin (2010) and European Commission (2013). For national and regional examples, see IOM (2018).

42 McAdam (2012); Kälin (2010).



This legal gap in international protection, and the absence of other types of measures to address these movements, have been acknowledged by a range of political and non-political actors. The next section outlines the international approach and how climate-driven migration as a policy issue has developed from the mid-1980s, to the international climate change negotiations 20 years later, to the PA in 2015 and to the recent developments after Paris, with processes such as the Task Force on Displacement (TFD) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). Section 3 concentrates on the EU and maps out the internal milestones and policy documents regarding climate-driven migration within the Union. Section 4 draws on existing research on norm diffusion and policy processes, in order to identify the mechanisms that have underpinned the process thus far, and to offer possible explanations for why we have not seen more substantial political action to address migration resulting from climate change. Finally, the report presents conclusions and proposes a set of policy recommendations for policy actors in the EU who wish to advance the responses to climate-driven migration in all its complexity.

2. The international approach

This section outlines the developments regarding climate-induced migration as a policy issue. In doing so, it explains the role of key actors, such as the UNHCR and the IOM and how the discussions have been considered in forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Nansen Initiative. The last section discusses the most recent developments, particularly in the GCM and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and how these forums might provide new platforms for international policymaking on climate-driven migration.

2.1 The birth of a new policy issue

While human migration as a result of environmental change is not new as such, the conceptual birth of environmental- and climate-driven migration is generally traced back to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report from 1985, which mentioned “environmental refugees” and their lack of protection.⁴³ An IPCC report from 1992 then concluded that “the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration”,⁴⁴ firmly establishing climate-driven migration as part of the climate change policy field. Debates then unfolded throughout the 1990s, in the academic realm in particular, where divides emerged between two opposing sides. An alarmist side, which painted pictures of massive future waves of hundreds of millions of “environmental refugees” essentially framed these refugees as a security threat. The other side was composed of sceptics, who stressed the complexity and multi-causality of these migration patterns, as well as questioning the future estimates in numbers.⁴⁵

2.2 A boost in interest

Despite the academic divides in the 1990s and early 2000s, climate-driven migration was still a relatively peripheral issue, not very well-known among the broader public. A close tracing of the process reveals that the issue experienced a great leap in international attention around the years 2007-2009.⁴⁶ At this point, climate-driven migration was actively connected to an increased general security interest within the UN and in the EU, especially related to climate change.⁴⁷ “Climate refugees” and similar denominations became “buzz words” and the topic in fashion at this time, and every organization or actor with even the slightest interest in climate change politics seemed to make climate and migration part of

43 El-Hinnawi (1985).

44 IPCC (1992) §5.0.10.

45 Described in Gemenne (2011a). For an example of an “alarmist” text, see Myers and Kent (1995). For a “sceptical” example, see Black (1998).

46 Jakobsson (2018a).

47 Ibid; Geddes and Somerville (2013); White (2011).

their agenda. As a result of this, a large number of reports exist from this time, many leaning towards the alarmist logic or use of language.⁴⁸

These developments between 2007 and 2009 show how linkages between the issue of climate-driven migration and security were successful in putting climate-driven migration firmly on the political agenda, in the UN as well as in the EU. But there have also been successful attempts to frame the issue with humanitarian connotations, as “the human face of climate change”. This take on climate-driven migration focused on the vulnerable people affected, using them and their destinies to illustrate the current and future effects on humans and societies. As such, it gave important leverage for humanitarian actors trying to push climate change and migration into the UNFCCC climate negotiations in 2008 and 2009.⁴⁹ They did so primarily through a subgroup on climate change migration and displacement to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) task force on climate change established in 2008, by which these issues gradually became part of the UNFCCC discourse.⁵⁰ At COP14 in Poznań, climate change and human mobility were present in background documents, but not included in the final text.⁵¹ One of the most important landmarks in the UNFCCC context came two years later, at COP16, with the inclusion in the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework in which parties were invited to:

*Undertake [...] measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels.*⁵²

The relative success of having had formal UNFCCC recognition of climate-change-induced displacement and migration made the Cancun Adaptation Framework a stepping stone from which international actors on climate-driven migration could further accelerate their work on the issue.⁵³

48 See for example Christian Aid (2007); Kolmannskog (2008); WBGU (2007).

49 Warner (2011); Gemenne (2011a); Jakobsson (2018a).

50 McAdam (2014).

51 Warner (2011); UNFCCC (2009).

52 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2011) §14f.

53 McAdam (2014).

2.3 A breaking point

2011, the year after Cancún and its adaptation framework, became an important juncture in the policy developments on climate-driven migration. An UNHCR expert meeting held at the beginning of the year pointed to the legal gaps met by external displacements from climate change and to the need to close this gap. However, attempts to act on this message in later UNHCR meetings failed. First, at the UNHCR ExCom in June, the member states opposed a proposal to make the UNHCR a lead agency on protection for natural disaster displacement. And then, in December, the UNHCR tried to gain support at its ministerial meeting for developing a framework to fill the identified protection gaps. However, this proposal also failed and as a result, it was difficult for the UNHCR to take the issue forward internally.⁵⁴ Interview data on these developments indicate that the UNHCR was indeed prepared to take a lead on protection matters for this group, but their hands were tied by the lack of enthusiasm from the member states. This lack of enthusiasm stemmed, among other things, from a feeling that the UNHCR already had too much to handle under its mandate.⁵⁵

Despite, or rather as a result of, these setbacks, policymaking on climate-driven migration took a new path in 2011, with the creation of the Nansen Initiative. This was initiated by the Norwegian and Swiss governments and intended as a discursive platform where states (primarily at a regional level) could exchange ideas, experiences and best practices regarding how to address cross-border disaster displacement.⁵⁶ Between 2011 and 2015, the Nansen Initiative was one of the most important and influential platforms for discussing matters related to climate change, disasters and displacement.

⁵⁴ Ibid; UNHCR (2011); UNHCR (2015).

⁵⁵ Jakobsson (2018a).

⁵⁶ The Nansen Initiative (2015).

2.4 Current developments 2015-2019

The autumn of 2015 was expected to be a pivotal moment in international politics on climate change at large, but also for policy discussions on climate-driven migration. The consultations of the Nansen Initiative, which up until then had been held at regional levels, concluded with a global consultation resulting in the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (hereafter referred to as the Nansen Protection Agenda). This agenda outlines several measures and tools that can be used by states as inspiration or a blueprint for addressing disaster displacement.⁵⁷

However, the big event of the year was, of course the COP21 in Paris. While advocates for climate-driven migration might have hoped for more concrete promises of action to address this kind of migration and protect those affected, the result was a decision to create a task force to “develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change”.⁵⁸ Although this decision did not make any promises other than to further investigate the issue, many involved actors were also happy and relieved that climate change displacement was formally addressed at all, given the outcome in Paris. This had not always been evident in the negotiations leading up to the final draft.⁵⁹

The autumn of 2015 marked a breaking point in the normative developments on climate-driven migration. Calls to enhance protection for this group had not gained substantial or formal acceptance, but it was a time of conclusion for central processes and the beginning of new, possibly crucial, paths. The Protection Agenda from the Nansen Initiative and the TFD cemented at the COP21 in Paris constituted important steps forward, as they represented a joint international will to continue their work on addressing mobility issues in relation to disasters and climate change. On the other hand, neither the Protection Agenda nor the creation of the TFD were promises for enhanced protection mechanisms for the concerned groups.

⁵⁷ The Nansen Initiative (2015).

⁵⁸ UNFCCC (2009b).

⁵⁹ Jakobsson (2018a).

Since 2015, part of the international work on addressing climate-driven migration has been led by the TFD. However, another, perhaps more promising, forum has emerged in the GCM, situated in the UN system. The GCM originates from the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants in New York in September 2016. The parties of the conference adopted the New York Declaration, which, among other things, set the path to create two new global compacts: the GCM and the GCR.⁶⁰

The Global Compacts were adopted at a subsequent conference in Marrakesh, in December 2018. While not a legally binding treaty, the GCM is an important milestone for the work on addressing climate-driven migration. Most importantly, the compact acknowledges that climate change, environmental degradation and both slow- and sudden-onset natural disasters can be drivers of migration. These types of migration movements are primarily referred to in Objective 2 of the compact, under the subtitle: “Natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation”. This part of the compact suggests several measures, including: to strengthen joint analysis and sharing of information; to develop adaptation and resilience strategies; to integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies; to address the vulnerabilities of people affected; and to consider recommendations from state-led consultative processes, such as the Nansen Protection Agenda.⁶¹ Other sections of importance to climate-driven migration can be found in Objective 5, which is concerned with pathways for regular migration. The compact there suggests developing existing practices for admission and stay for those leaving their countries of origin, due to sudden-onset natural disasters. The practices include the issuing of humanitarian visas, private sponsorships and temporary work permits.⁶² In relation to slow-onset disasters, the compact aims to strengthen solutions, such as planned relocation and visa options.⁶³ Overall, the GCM gives more attention to climate-driven migration than has been given in

60 UNGA (2016).

61 UNGA (2018a) §18h-1.

62 *Ibid.*, §21g.

63 *Ibid.*, §21h.

previous significant migration or climate-related agreements in the UN system. It even suggests measures to identify and develop possible solutions for safe and regular pathways. However, the suggested measures are not overly specified, and it will be very much up to the member states to take these forward.

The GCR also mentions disaster displacement, but it does not acknowledge natural disasters as causes of *refugee* movement per se. Nevertheless, it recognizes that “climate, environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly *interact* with the drivers of refugee movements”,⁶⁴ and that “in certain situations, external forced displacement may result from sudden-onset natural disasters and environmental degradation”.⁶⁵ Moreover, the GCR calls for the inclusion of refugees in disaster-risk reduction strategies,⁶⁶ and mentions those forcibly displaced by natural disasters as examples of groups whose protection needs might be addressed by temporary protection or humanitarian stay arrangements.⁶⁷

Around the same time as the 2018 migration conference in Marrakech, the TFD presented its recommendations to the COP24 in Katowice. The content of the recommendations was in line with the suggestions outlined in the GCM and GCR – in principal requesting strengthened cooperation, preparedness and risk reduction. In terms of policies and legal frameworks, the TFD asks actors to use existing tools (such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement) and to exchange experiences and knowledge. However, they also ask states to consider formulating policies and regulations that takes climate-driven migration into account.⁶⁸

In parallel to the developments in the TFD and the GCM, the Platform for Disaster Displacement (PDD) – the follow-up arrangement to the Nansen Initiative – began its work to implement the 2015 Nansen Protection Agenda. The key objectives for the PDD are to: (1) help people at risk of displacement to stay in their homes; (2) help people affected by disas-

64 UNGA (2018b) §8 Emphasis added.

65 *Ibid.*, §12.

66 *Ibid.*, §79.

67 UNGA (2018b) §63.

68 Task Force on Displacement (2018).

ters move out of harm's way; and (3) better protect people forced to leave their homes. In the protection area, there are already existing practices at state level, which were identified in the consultations held by the Nansen initiative. Such practices can be humanitarian visas and temporary protection, for instance, and the PDD works to highlight and promote these examples, for them to be harmonized and/or replicated at a regional level.⁶⁹ The PDD also works to ensure that disaster displacement is considered and included in relevant international policy processes, such as the already mentioned GCM, but also regarding disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change.⁷⁰

In sum, there has been a growing awareness in the international system regarding climate change and migration and the associated legal gaps. However, little substantial action has been taken to properly address these gaps. A few important factors that help to explain this include definitional complexities, the lack of devoted venues, and the sensitivity of climate change and migration issues respectively. All these aspects are further discussed in Section 4. Nevertheless, new forums emerging in the past couple of years, the GCM in particular, might constitute an appropriate platform to take discussions forward. The next section turns the focus to the European level, and maps out the presence of climate-driven migration in the political context of the EU.

3. The politics of climate-driven migration in the EU

In 2008, i.e. around the same time as climate-driven migration as a policy issue had been firmly established on the international agenda, it was also gaining attention in European politics. One of the first policy documents came from Tina Acketoft, a Swedish liberal politician, who was appointed

69 Platform on Disaster Displacement (2019b).

70 Platform on Disaster Displacement (2019a).

rapporteur on the issue for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Acketoft's report was relatively strong-worded, as it not only stated that more people were already displaced from environmental catastrophes than from armed conflicts or persecution,⁷¹ but it also called upon European states to elaborate on a new international convention, and to expand national legislation in order to recognize environmentally-induced migrants.⁷²

Moreover, in 2008, the Commission, together with the High Representative, presented a joint paper to the European Council on climate change and international security. The report mentioned environmentally-induced migration and noted that increased migratory pressure on Europe could be expected, partly as a result of an increased risk for conflict in transit and destination areas.⁷³

Within the European Parliament, the political interest of this issue proved to be low, except among the Greens, who took on the role as advocates for enlightening this issue and promoting new protection instruments. The Greens/EFA group of the EU were not late in picking up the issue and, among other things, formulated their own "Declaration for Climate Migrations" in 2008, which recognizes that there are and will be people displaced by climate disruptions who are not enjoying any right to protection, other than humanitarian. Following this argument, they recommend European institutions to anticipate environmental displacement and to promote legal instruments that cover such protection.⁷⁴

In 2009, the European Commission launched a White Paper on a European framework for action on adaptation to climate change. The Commission stated that the links between climate change and migration should be considered in EU security, development and migration policies.⁷⁵

A subsequent milestone for European work on climate-driven migration was when the European Council mentioned climate-driven migra-

71 Acketoft (2008) §3.

72 *Ibid.*, §118.

73 Council of the European Union (2008).

74 Greens/EFA Group of the European Parliament (2008).

75 Commission of the European Communities (2009).

tion in the so-called Stockholm Programme in 2009. The Stockholm Programme defines the work of the EU in the area of justice, freedom and security for the period 2010-2014. On the issue of climate-driven migration, it states:

*The connection between climate change, migration and development needs to be further explored, and the European Council therefore invites the Commission to present an analysis of the effects of climate change on international migration, including its potential effects on immigration to the European Union.*⁷⁶

We can thus detect a similar pattern at the EU-level in 2008-2009 to that of the international level during these years. Several documents from different European actors were issued, drawing attention to the phenomenon and the legal protection problems, as well as calling for action.

The sudden boost in interest around 2008-2009 also exposed knowledge deficits regarding the underlying mechanisms and causal connections regarding climate change and migration. This prompted a range of research projects aimed to provide a better foundation for knowledge, and possible solutions to address climate-driven migration. For instance, in 2007, the European Commission launched the “Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios” (EACH-FOR) research project, in which several case studies investigated the connections between environmental degradation and migration. The 2009 report concluded that events linked to climate change were not the only environmental factors capable of triggering migration, but that it needed to be considered. The authors also concluded that it was not likely that the most part of the migrants would cross international borders and come to Europe. However, it was brought forward that the EU should be prepared to assist exposed countries and regions with improving coping capacities for the effects of climate change, as well as with humanitarian aid, if needed.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ European Council (2010) Section 6.1.2.

⁷⁷ EACH-FOR (2009).

A few years later, in 2011, the European Parliament had begun to show interest in this issue and presented a study that assessed the possibilities for protecting environmentally-induced migrants within existing frameworks, and how these frameworks could be evolved to offer an improved response to such displacement.⁷⁸ In relation to the Commission's interest, let us remind ourselves of the Stockholm Programme and its invitation to the Commission to "present an analysis of the effect of climate change on international migration"⁷⁹ The European Commission responded to this with a detailed commission staff working document on climate change and migration in 2013. The working document goes through possible EU policy responses in relation to adaptation (as a means to reduce displacement) and existing frameworks. While it concludes that substantial inflow of migration to the EU as a result of climate change is unlikely, it also stresses the need for increased knowledge, dialogue and cooperation.⁸⁰

However, after the staff working document was published, very little happened in EU politics regarding climate change and migration. The Greens/EFA group in the parliament made another attempt position themselves in the climate migration debate,⁸¹ but the overall sentiment towards climate-driven migration issues was indifference, and to most European politicians, it had become a non-issue.⁸² The increased empirical understanding seemed to evoke more questions than it answered, but more importantly, the general impression is that EU politicians did not perceive this problem to be urgent or pressing. At the same time, it should be noted that anti-immigration parties and populist movements grew in several European countries which did not facilitate measures on enhanced protection mechanisms.

However, in later years there have been some, albeit modest, signs of a renewed European interest, probably as a result of a general boost in interest and a fear of climate change. As an example, Jean-Claude

78 Kraler et al., (2011).

79 European Council (2010) Section 6.1.2.

80 European Commission (2013).

81 Flautre et al., (2013).

82 Geddes and Somerville (2013).

Juncker – President of the European Commission at the time – mentioned climate-driven migration in his State of the Union speech in 2015, just a couple of months before the leaders of the world would gather for the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris. Juncker said: “Climate change is even one the root causes of a new migration phenomenon. Climate refugees will become a new challenge – if we do not act swiftly.”⁸³

Although EU-activities related to climate-driven migration following the staff working document (see above) have been relatively moderate, policy documents from the last couple of years have demonstrated that this issue is still, or again, part of EU policy discussions. For instance, communications on “A European agenda for migration”,⁸⁴ setting out the steps towards the Common European Asylum System (CEAS);⁸⁵ and forced displacement and development⁸⁶ list climate change as a direct or indirect driver of migration. Moreover, the need to consider the effects of climate change on migration and displacement in EU strategies and policies has been suggested in, for example, European Commission reports on democratic scenarios for the EU⁸⁷ and the future of migration in the EU.⁸⁸

A resolution from the European Parliament on EU external action goes further, calling on the EU and the member states to “take a leading role in recognising the impact of climate change on mass displacement, as the scale and frequency of displacements are likely to increase”. Furthermore, it takes the view that “persons displaced by the effects of climate change should be given a special international protection status which takes account of the specific nature of their situation”.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, there has been little concrete action or specified suggestions on solutions or measures in EU discussions. Also, in the discussions on the reform of the CEAS, climate-driven migration has been remarkably absent. Neither climate change nor environment, for instance, are mentioned in the draft proposal for a new Qualification Regulation.⁹⁰

83 Juncker (2015).

84 European Commission (2015).

85 European Commission (2016c).

86 European Commission (2016a).

87 Lutz et al., (2019).

88 Szczepanikova and Van Criekinge (2018).

89 European Parliament (2017) §31.

90 European Commission (2016b).

In sum, the mapping of the processes on the international and the European level respectively demonstrates that the main activity thus far has been at the global level, with the UNHCR and the IOM as main actors. However, this report suggests that now may be the time for the EU to advance its position on adequately addressing climate-driven migration. The concluding section elaborates on steps which EU policymakers can take to better respond to migration driven by climate change, including possible protection measures. Before this, however, the next section goes deeper into key features of the policy process on the international level thus far, and analyzes the ways in which these features have influenced the developments.

4. Obstacles and opportunities

At first glance, simple explanations about the – thus far moderate – outcomes of the international politics of climate-induced migration may seem ready at hand, at least when it comes to questions of enhanced protection. The lack of political will and the general level of inaction to enhance protection for the group could be explained by different factors: the sensitivity of providing rights to other as well as a compromised national sovereignty and a lack of resources to do so. It could be argued as being simply unfeasible from a political perspective to enhance protection for the group. While these kinds of arguments undoubtedly make up part of the explanation, a closer look reveals that they do not provide a holistic and adequate answer. Therefore, this section elaborates on specific aspects and mechanisms that have influenced the policy process in different ways. The discussion highlights the following aspects: first, the lack of a unified view on definitions and scope of the policy issue at stake; second, the group of advocates and their complex roles; third, existing forums to discuss and negotiate actions on climate-driven displacement; and fourth, different types of resistance that have caused the process to occasionally stagnate.

4.1 Definitions and scope

The calls for enhanced protection standards for climate-driven migration have continuously struggled with the lack of both clear and unified definitions and a coherent understanding of the scope of the issue. Policymakers and advocates have, for a long time, lacked a conceptual apparatus for understanding, explaining and addressing the complex and wide scope of human mobility entailed in this phenomenon. For instance, what is an environmental migrant? Or, is it a climate refugee? Should the debate concern only disasters related to climate change (such as cyclones, drought or sea level rise), or should it also include displacement resulting from geophysical events, such as earthquakes? Should we discuss protection mechanisms for any kind of climate-driven migration, or only where it is clearly forced, cross-border displacement?

These complexities and disparate understandings derive from an increased empirical understanding of the phenomenon on the one hand, and as a result of a long-standing academic debate on the other (see Section 2.1). As we saw in the previous section, a great boost in interest for “climate refugees” and issues on climate-driven migration came together with active linkages of climate-driven migration to security, and a framing of the phenomenon as “the human face of climate change”. As was also discussed above, at this time (around 2008), several new research projects were launched as a result of this boost in interest, and with the aim to produce more knowledge on the empirical connections between climate change and human mobility. However, as empirical knowledge on this phenomenon expanded, it became increasingly clear how many different types of movement could be categorized as climate-driven, and how these patterns did not always play out as expected. Debates on the subject of climate-driven migration was also heavily polarized between an alarmist view on the one side and a sceptical view on the other.

However, the increased confusion regarding definitions and scope limitations on climate-driven migration as a policy issue must not be understood only as a failure to “put the foot down” or to agree upon what the issue at stake is about. It must also be understood as an attempt,

from advocates and actors engaged in the issue, to fully encompass all the nuances of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, theory suggests that a new norm should be clear and specific, in order to increase its chances of taking effect.⁹¹ Moreover, existing research show that a common language and a common form of terminology are key to successful policymaking,⁹² and several reports⁹³ and academic analyses⁹⁴ have pointed to this as one of the most important obstacles for making policy progress on climate-driven migration. Additionally, as part of the enhanced understanding of the scope of climate-driven migration, discussions on climate-driven migration became split up into a range of different issues, for example on protection, adaptation and development. This somewhat subordinated matters regarding protection, rather than making them the core of the discussions.

In addition to these definitional aspects, policy processes on climate-driven migration have also suffered from what the literature refers to as “coupling” problems.⁹⁵ Research on coupling has shown that a new policy issue is more likely to take off if the problem can be “coupled” with available and feasible solutions. In this case, we have experienced great difficulties among both policy-makers and advocates to formulate feasible solutions – partly because of the aforementioned complexity of the subject. Therefore, in the process going forward, more efforts need to be put in to streamlining definitions in order to create a unified terminology and a common language on climate-driven migration. In addition, advocates and actors aiming to advance action on climate-driven migration should put more effort in specification of possible policy alternatives for policy makers to relate to.

91 Finnemore and Sikkink (1998); Legro (1997).

92 See for example Jakobsson (2018a).

93 See for example European Commission (2013).

94 See for example Castles (2010); Piguët et al., (2011).

95 Kingdon (1984).

4.2 The group of advocates and their complex roles

International advocacy on climate-driven migration has been spearheaded by a small group with close coordination, of which individuals at the UNHCR, the IOM and the Nansen Initiative have been key actors. However, not even these key advocates have had the same view of the scope of this group and the definition of central concepts. Moreover, while the classic advocates in the literature on policy and norms usually belong to an interest group of some type,⁹⁶ the main drivers of this issue in political forums have been international agencies such as the UNHCR and the IOM. This has had some peculiar consequences. From one perspective, access to relevant policy forums are key for the successful promotion of a new norm. On the other hand, these organizations are inter-governmental (rather than non-governmental organizations, (NGOs)), which means that they work in the interest of member states. As a result, several bureaucrats working for these organizations have observed that they experience or practice dual roles in their work on climate-driven migration. That is, they are key advocates in promoting issues connected to the challenges of climate-driven migration, and include them in international processes of consultation and negotiations. But, at the same time they – and the secretariats – are also civil servants, supposedly without their own interests and agendas, and working only in the interests of the member states. In addition, they have an important function as experts, being invited as speakers and specialists in consultations. In reality, these different roles are not always so easy to juggle.⁹⁷ The practical consequences are, for instance, that aspects of sensitive character, such as an enhanced protection definition, cannot be as forcefully pursued as they might have been from a lobby organization or an NGO. However, such actors do not usually have the same direct access and credibility in relation to policymakers and negotiations.

96 Finnemore and Sikkink (1998).

97 Jakobsson (2018a). These conclusions theoretically draw on research on “norm entrepreneurs” and “message entrepreneurs”. See for example Björkdahl (2008); Björkdahl (2013); Finnemore and Sikkink (1998); Fukuda-Parr and Hulme (2011).

4.3 The importance of suitable venues

A venue is a platform (for example an organization, a series of summits, an established work process) that caters for the norm; is devoted to it; or in which discussions and negotiations on the new norm can be pursued. New strands of norm research indicate that venues matter for whether new norms are accepted or not.⁹⁸ In this case, the most important venues have been the UNFCCC, the UNHCR, the Nansen Initiative and recently the GCMR. A close investigation of the process reveals that the UNFCCC and the UNHCR have been important venues, but not sufficient to achieve substantial action on climate-driven migration.

Even though the UNFCCC is the most important platform for addressing the adverse effects of climate change at an international level, the scope of the negotiations is vast, covering numerous aspects of climate change. In this setting, discussions on climate-driven migration have only been of minor and peripheral importance.⁹⁹ Additionally, issues on human mobility have come to be negotiated under the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage, infusing the discussions with even more sensitive aspects, as this section relates to questions of responsibility and compensation. The underlying logic of this sensitivity is that acknowledgment of migration flows resulting from climate change would imply an onus on the richest countries of the world to protect and/or address these flows and their origins. The reason for this is that these countries generally have the greatest responsibility for the emissions causing global warming.¹⁰⁰

UNHCR has proved to be an important actor, in highlighting groups displaced from climate change and the legal gaps they face, not least through the engagement of the former High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the member states of the UNHCR have not shown a particular interest in expanding refugee rights – at least not in a way similar to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Also, the UNHCR man-

98 Coleman (2011); Jakobsson (2018a).

99 Randall (2016); McAdam (2011).

100 Jakobsson (2018b).

101 Now Secretary-General of the United Nations.

date has been strained by its responsibilities over “conventional” refugees, which has hit record figures in the past few years,¹⁰² and therefore environmental displacement has been a relatively minor question in the UNHCR.

The Nansen Initiative has been more successful in what it set out to do, namely, to exchange ideas, best practices, and experiences – primarily at a regional level. There are two important explanations for this. The first is that the initiative settled for a more specified and limited target group – cross-border disaster displacement – and was fully devoted to this task (in relation to the other venues, which had a range of other issues on their agendas). The second explanation is that it had no ambition to force new responsibilities on states, which made it more feasible and appealing for state actors. While it can be argued that the impact of a non-binding document such as the Nansen Protection Agenda can be questioned, given that non-compliance cannot be sanctioned, we have already seen signs of the recommendations of the Protection agenda now feeding into other processes, such as the Global Compacts.

After the 2016 Migration Summit and the New York Declaration, actors involved in the policy processes on climate-driven migration expressed hopes in the Global Compacts being more appropriate forums to develop and strengthen measures to address these types of migration.¹⁰³ The GCM and the GCR have already demonstrated that they acknowledge the challenges faced by groups displaced by climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation. But, their real impacts and influence over developments ahead remain to be seen.

Another aspect that connects both to the conceptual diffusion described above, as well as to the aspect of venues, is that climate-driven migration has been linked to several policy areas: migration and refugees; security; development; climate change; human rights; and loss and damage. Two main implications follow from this. One is that it was initially unclear who (i.e. which institution or organization) was most responsible

¹⁰² UNHCR (2019b).

¹⁰³ Ionesco and Chazalnoel (2018).

for addressing climate-driven migration. The other implication is that any attempt to properly address these migration patterns would most probably require a great coordination effort between different institutions and actors. An illustrative example is that within the European Commission, the issue was first handled in the Department for Home Affairs (HOME), but has since been increasingly taken over by the Department for Development Cooperation (DEVCO) and the Department for Climate Action (CLIMA). In addition, it has also been part of the work of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).¹⁰⁴

With this in mind, a priority ahead for involved actors should be to identify, make use of and safeguard the most appropriate venues for negotiations and discussions - the global compacts for instance.

4.4 Expressions of resistance

Throughout the process of finding substantial ways to address climate-driven migration, attempts to push the developments forward have been closely followed by expressions of resistance and lack of political will. One of the more outspoken expressions of resistance was at the UNHCR ExCom and ministerial meeting in 2011 (described above), when discussions on climate-driven migration were even removed from the UN for a time.

However, resistance to new norms and policy issues can come in different forms, both as outspoken resistance, by the promotion of opposing norms,¹⁰⁵ and as neglect and so-called “agenda exclusion”.¹⁰⁶ Actors have described that the main type of resistance targeted at climate-driven migration has been more in the form of de-prioritization and neglect.¹⁰⁷ Over time, we have seen this in the repeated calls for more knowledge over substantial action and solutions. At the EU level, we have seen this, for example, in the lack of follow-up on the staff working paper from 2013 (described above). In addition, the political sentiments towards

¹⁰⁴ This information was given to the author in interviews with EU Commission bureaucrats in 2013 and 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Bloomfield and Scott (2017).

¹⁰⁶ Tallberg (2003); Bachrach and Baratz (1963).

¹⁰⁷ Jakobsson (2018a).

enhanced protection for migrants in the aftermath of the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015, accompanied by a rise in European populist and anti-immigration parties, have also created a less prosperous environment for further policy developments on climate-driven migration.

In sum, this section has shown how aspects linked to definitions, actors, venues and resistance have interacted with the policy process in different ways. The next and concluding section takes these conclusions forward and outlines their implications for policy.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

At a global level, we see that climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters are already causes of displacement. Convincing and far-reaching evidence shows how these factors interact with migration and mobility. Even if the majority of this migration is internal, there are still severe gaps in the international protection at regional and international levels, which need to be adequately addressed. This does not mean that the EU should act out of fear. Many scholars and policymakers consider high influxes of direct climate-caused migration to the EU unlikely – at least in the near future. Nonetheless, the deficits in legal protection for many of those displaced by environmental factors cannot be disregarded. The international community and the EU must make sure that anyone in need is duly protected, especially in a world increasingly affected by climate change consequences.

This report has examined the key features of climate-driven migration as a phenomenon, and the policy processes which surround it. The report has highlighted the specific aspects and mechanisms which can help to identify possible explanations for why the policy developments on climate-driven migration have unfolded the way they have. First, the lack of a unified view on definitions and scope of the policy issue at stake. Second, the group of advocates and their complex roles. Third, the exist-

ing forums to discuss and negotiate actions on climate-driven migration; and finally, different types of resistance that has caused the process to occasionally stagnate.

Based on this analysis, this section will now propose a set of policy recommendations specifically aimed at aiding policy makers within the EU to better address protection issues in relation to climate-driven migration. The recommendations can also be of use to actors at the national and international level, which should also consider appropriate measures to minimize and address migration driven by climate change.

The EU has an important role to play here and could substantially advance its position on addressing climate-driven migration. Several EU states and EU institutions have already shown a willingness to take a lead in various activities to tackle and address climate change at large. Climate-driven migration is another example of an issue where the EU could act as an inspirational role model on how to translate knowledge into adequate action. As such, the EU can demonstrate examples of how to formulate substantial strategies to assist and protect those who are driven from their homes by climate change, both in cases of migration to the EU as well as in cases of migration within and between other regions.

The policy measures suggested here include strengthened protection standards for those displaced by climate change consequences. This report has showed that the lack of a unified view on definitions and scope of the policy issue at stake has obstructed policy makers at the international arena from providing an appropriate protection measure to those displaced due to climate change. Empirical research has pointed to the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon of climate-driven migration and displacement. It would therefore be difficult to formulate a solution or protection instrument that covers all instances. An adequate response would need to be diversified and could be understood as following three different tracks:

1. The first track consists of groups that might already be covered in other European frameworks, even without specific references to climate change. Such groups could be migrating work-

ers or those fleeing from climate-induced conflict. In these cases, the EU must ensure that existing standards remain and are safeguarded.

2. The second track consists of people who need help to be evacuated or relocated from areas that are no longer inhabitable. These types of situation will probably become more frequent in the future, following sea level rise or drought, for example. In these instances, different types of resettlement scheme, similar to those already practiced in relation to the Refugee Convention, might be an option.
3. The third track consists of forced displacement, most manifest in situations of sudden-onset natural disasters. Here, the EU could consider developing protection standards like the subsidiary protection as set out in the Qualification Directive and its proposed reform. Other protection options for forced displacement, which might be more appealing in the initial stages, are temporary permits for the most acute phases after a disaster, or humanitarian visas (both of which have been suggested in the GCR and by the PDD).

A broader European protection definition would put the EU in the lead spot on protection issues for current and future migration flows. The EU could thus set the standard to be followed by other regions, or at the international level. It would also be a way for the EU to respond to, and take responsibility for, the humanitarian needs of those hardest hit by climate change and its consequences. However, if climate-driven migration to the EU continues to be marginal, there is a chance that a broader protection definition would have only minor humanitarian effects. Strengthened protection standards would therefore have to be accompanied by external efforts on development, adaptation, risk reduction and humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters. For instance, useful dialogues, partnerships and structures are already present within the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which structures

the EU's external migration policy.

An aspect that poses an obstacle to expanding European protection legislation to these areas is the requirement for applicants not to be able to avail themselves of the protection of their home countries, including the internal flight options. A natural disaster, whether slow or sudden, rarely covers the entire country, and it might be argued that displaced people must relocate internally, when possible. However, as climate change consequences worsen globally, there might be reasons for the EU to rethink this aspect – both in relation to planned relocation and to protection standards. Such an approach would consider the increased social and environmental pressure of internal displacement in relation to resource scarcity. Pressures like these have been proved to worsen environmental degradation and trigger conflicts (which in turn has induced migration and displacement). An option of EU protection – even when there are options of internal displacement – would thus relieve pressures on local ecosystems, decrease the risk of resource-related conflicts, and relieve feelings of climate injustice that might trigger conflict and social unrest – phenomena which, in turn, might have negative impacts on the EU.¹⁰⁸ In addition, such measures would assist already vulnerable states that suffer far more from the consequences of climate change than most European countries.

As this report has shown, much work on climate-driven migration has already been done at a global level. However, one explanation to why we have not seen further development on the issue is the lack of adequate forums to discuss and negotiate actions. The UNFCCC and the UNHCR have been important but not sufficient venues to achieve substantial responses to climate-driven migration. As this report has highlighted the GCM as a promising venue for further policy discussions, the EU could make use of this platform provided by the compact. However, it is not the EU itself, but its member states, that are parties of the GCM and its negotiations. Nevertheless, the EU should make use of the platform provided

¹⁰⁸ Any such solutions must, of course, take the migrants' own agency into account and their rights to take part in decisions regarding their movement.

by the compact – and it already has, to an extent, for instance through detailed input in the compact to the UN General Assembly, which mentioned climate change impacts and natural disasters.¹⁰⁹ In terms of developing more appropriate standards to address climate-driven migration, the EU could make use of the experience and expertise available from within the GCM – both from other states and regions, but also from involved organizations. In addition, given that the EU decides to move towards a lead role on addressing climate-driven migration, the GCM is most certainly a forum for promoting these issues and exerting pressure on other states to follow. In this case, the EU could also work to ensure that climate-driven migration continues to be on the GCM agenda. Moreover, not all EU member states have signed the GCM.¹¹⁰ The EU should work with those states in order to change this: not least because the GCM could be an important framework from which EU internal policy on migration can continue.

In general, this report strongly urges EU policymakers to ensure that they are familiar not only with the recommendations included in the GCM and the GCR, but also with the suggestions and tools offered by the Nansen Protection Agenda, the work conducted within the PDD, and the recommendations put forward by the TFD when developing the EU approach. These processes are often intertwined and overlapping and build upon several years of discussion on how to find appropriate responses to climate-driven migration. As such, the ideas formulated in these documents also feed into the policy recommendations of this report in different ways.

When moving forward on an EU response to climate-driven migration, it is important for EU policymakers to consider that climate-driven migration and/or displacement encompass a wide range of mobility patterns and causalities, as has been emphasized throughout this report. An adequate response must therefore include different types of measures and solutions. Nevertheless, this report also wishes to stress that a recog-

¹⁰⁹ European Union, “EU Input to the UN Secretary General’s Report on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”.

¹¹⁰ Apap (2019).

dition of the empirical complexity of this phenomenon must not stand in the way of keeping sight of the remaining legal gaps, especially in terms of cross-border displacement. In addition, policy makers at all levels should remember that even though national and regional examples might lead the way – climate-driven migration, like all migration, cannot be properly addressed unilaterally.

Policy recommendations

Against this backdrop, the policy recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Even though there have been conceptual advancements in the past few years, more effort needs to be put into streamlining definitions, in order to create a unified terminology and a common language on climate-driven migration.
- 2) The EU should make use of and safeguard the GCM as a venue for negotiations and discussions. In doing so, EU institutions and representatives should:
 - a) Strive to advance and promote issues related to climate-driven migration in the GCM context.
 - b) Encourage all member states to sign the compact.
- 3) Strengthen EU protection for climate-driven migrants who are not already covered by other applicable regulations. Such strengthening measures could include:
 - a) Recognizing natural disasters as a cause of forced displacement – and thus a provision for attaining protection status within the frames of the new EU Qualification Regulation.
 - b) Considering the possibilities of international protection, even where there might be a theoretical option of internal flight, in order to relieve pressure on local resources and ecosystems (especially as such pressure has proved to be a breeding ground for conflict).

c) Assisting people and states in need in finding safe spots after sudden-onset disasters. This can be done through humanitarian assistance, temporary permits or humanitarian visas.

d) Assisting international humanitarian organizations and exposed states with resettlement-like solutions for displaced people, where appropriate. This should also be considered for cases of slow-onset disasters, where relocation is needed as a way of responding to vulnerable people, who have fewer chances of maintaining their livelihood as a result of environmental degradation.

When assessing these recommendations, especially those relating to strengthened protection, EU policymakers are also encouraged to keep the following essential aspects in mind. First, ensure safe pathways to safe places for any type of displacement and migration; second, ensure that protection measures and any other ways of addressing and responding to climate-driven migration are consistent with fundamental human rights; third, remember that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges that no one will be left behind.

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Tackling climate-driven migration through resilience and adaptation

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In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that “*the greatest impact of climate change could be on human migration*”. Since then various analysts have tried to estimate the scale of future flows of migrants. With all the social, economic and environmental factors at work it has been difficult to predict the scale of future climate migration flows.¹¹² However, displacement linked to climate change is not a future hypothetical – but a current reality for many communities. Impending forced migration due to climate change is already threatening the people of the island state of Tuvalu.

The people of Tuvalu are fighting an uphill battle against the impacts of climate change, whereby storms and high tides threaten to sweep away crops and contaminate the groundwater with salt. Tuvalu is therefore building natural defences to safeguard coral reefs and coastlines, investing in infrastructure to protect people, property and livestock

¹¹¹ The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author’s employer.

¹¹² Brown (2007).

from cyclones and storms. Tuvalu has also taken measures to reduce their CO₂e emissions, which are insignificant compared to most other countries. In the months leading up to the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 15) the former Tuvaluan Prime Minister, Apisai Ielemia, expressed Tuvalu's determination to stay on their own land:

*“while Tuvalu faces an uncertain future because of climate change, it is our view that Tuvaluans will remain in Tuvalu. We will fight to keep our country, our culture and our way of living. We are not considering any migration scheme. We believe if the right actions are taken to address climate change, Tuvalu will survive.”*¹¹³

The Tuvalu example highlights several important aspects of the future situation of climate change and migration. First, there is the irony that it is the developing countries and the countries that are the least responsible for emissions of greenhouse gases that will be the most affected by climate change. Secondly, it emphasises and reasserts the population's right to remain at home and places focus on adaptation strategies as possible responses to counteract the need for migration. Furthermore, Tuvalu's adaptation strategies offer insight into what coastal cities, rich and poor alike, can expect to encounter with rising sea levels. Human settlements are clustered around coasts and river mouths. Many of the world's megacities such as London, New York, Tokyo and Shanghai will all be affected by rising sea levels. Adapting to rising sea levels will come with an immense economic cost, and, while these cities might have the capacity to put efficient adaptation programmes into place, their poorer counterparts, populous metropolises such as Dhaka, Lagos and Jakarta, might not be able to adapt in the same extent.¹¹⁴ Migration might therefore be the only option for these communities. Rising sea levels are thus expected to be costly and encourage higher migration levels. However,

¹¹³ Ielemia. (2009).

¹¹⁴ Uitto et al., (2017).

with the right kind of adaptation strategies these communities can reduce their vulnerability to climate change and avert migration from being the only possible adaptation strategy.

The international community needs to prepare for a world where an increased amount of people will be on the move because of climate change.¹¹⁵ A decision has to be made how to best build for this tomorrow. Will these people relocate within their own countries or will they have to cross an international border and perhaps seek a future in Europe?

The EU and its Member States have committed themselves to implementing the 2030 Agenda and to advance its implementation globally through the full range of their external actions.¹¹⁶ The 2030 Agenda provides the EU with a framework to tackle the complex challenges facing us today, namely poverty, hunger and climate change. Although the connection between migration and climate change is not directly addressed in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) the 2030 Agenda still provides the EU with a roadmap towards building a better future.¹¹⁷ Through the implementation of the SDGs the EU can work to mitigate the need for international migration by investing in climate adaptation strategies in the communities most vulnerable to climate change. Building liveable, sustainable and resilient societies in these communities is one solution to tackle the prospect of large-scale displacement caused by climate change.

This report will explore how the EU, through development and adaptation policies, can build liveable, sustainable and resilient societies in order to reduce communities' vulnerability to climate change and hence mitigate the need to migrate.

¹¹⁵ Cheney (2018).

¹¹⁶ European Commission (2019).

¹¹⁷ Wilkinson et al., (2016).

1. Climate change, migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Understanding that there are severe deficits in essential aspects of human development around the world the United Nations (UN) strives to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (i.e. the SDGs). It is a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.¹¹⁸

In 2015 the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the world came together in the Paris Agreement (PA). Both decisions were made in the pursuit of a better world for both the generation of today and those of tomorrow. The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals with the aim to go even further to end all forms of poverty. In the years up to 2030 countries, whether rich, poor and middle-income, have pledged to mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, overcome inequalities and tackle climate change. The SDGs build on the understanding that sustainable development must involve all sectors of society; the achievement of one goal cannot come at the cost of another but builds on the linkages of each other to achieve synergy effects between every goal.¹¹⁹

To tackle climate change is also to fight poverty since climate change is expected to affect the poor most severely. To fight poverty without tackling climate change will be a losing battle. Climate change is already having a negative impact on health, food and water security as well as migration, peace and security. If left unchecked, climate change is expected to roll back the development gains made over the last few decades as well as prevent further advancements.¹²⁰ The IPCC states with *high confidence* that “climate change will slow down the pace of poverty reduction, jeopardize sustainable development, and undermine food

118 United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals.

119 Ibid.

120 United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals.

security”. This will particularly affect the poor.¹²¹ Weaker population groups are less capable of rebuilding their livelihoods after a disaster or even adapting to slowly change climate-framed natural resources. Failing to fight climate change will affect poor communities much harder and increase the likelihood that these people see no option but to migrate.

1.1 Climate change and development aid

Due to the strong interlinkages between climate action and sustainable development, all climate-related actions are likely to drive sustainable development in line with the SDGs. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without climate action, and many of the SDGs are core elements in tackling climate change.

Both the contribution of countries to climate change, as well as their capacity to prevent and cope with its consequences, vary enormously. Pledges have therefore been made that the Developing countries must do more than reduce their emissions but also take responsibility for their historic emissions and therefore provide financial assistance to developing countries. To enable the developing countries to enhance their domestic efforts. At COP 15 in 2009, the developed countries committed to mobilise jointly 100 USD billion a year in climate finance by 2020 to the developing countries.¹²²

¹²¹ Olsson et al. (2014)

¹²² UNFCCC (2019).

1.2 Adaptation and mitigation: strategies for combatting climate change

There are two main areas for climate developing aid, mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation efforts are projects which aim to decrease the causes of climate change, primarily the reduction of greenhouse gases. A mitigation project could involve installing solar panels or wind turbines to create clean energy rather than burning coal. It could also entail efforts to change consumption and behaviour patterns to reduce emissions. Adaptation, conversely, means to adapt the society to the changes caused by the climate change. This could involve building barriers against floodwater or, in contrast, to plan for a shortage of water in areas where the climate change will have this impact.¹²³ Köhlin et al. (2015) have raised critique stating that many OECD countries (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) favour climate mitigation to adaptation projects. Climate mitigation is a global common good, and the long-term effects of climate change are expected to have the most significant implications on the poor and least developed. However, Köhlin also argues that developed countries may seek to decrease Co₂e emissions abroad in order to continue their emissions at home.¹²⁴ Adaptation measures might be less popular given that it could be seen as giving up on the need to mitigate before all means to mitigate the problem have been tried. However, climate change is already occurring and the consequences are already severe, both for particularly vulnerable societies, such as Tuvalu and Bangladesh. However, Europe is also experiencing this, as demonstrated by the forest fires in recent summers. Both poor and vulnerable as well as rich and resilient societies now face a time when climate change cannot be ignored. It is thus in the interests of the EU to help vulnerable societies such as Bangladesh to prepare for the increasing magnitude of climate change and to build resilience towards these changes in order to enable people to live in dignity rather than displaced and having to migrate.

¹²³ UNOPS (2017).

¹²⁴ Köhlin et al. (2015).

2. Adaptation, resilience and sustainability

This section will now further explain the concepts of adaptation, resilience and sustainability. Adaptation efforts strive to build resilience to the effects of climate change. Most definitions of the term resilience build on the idea of a system's capacity to deal with change and continue to develop. This system could be anything from a forest to a city or an economy.¹²⁵ The Stockholm Resilience Centre makes a distinction between ecosystem resilience and social resilience.¹²⁶ Ecosystem resilience determines how many shocks such as storms, fire and pollutants an ecosystem can withstand without shifting into a qualitatively different state. It is the capacity of a system to rebuild itself after damage. Social resilience is the ability of human communities to recover from stresses and shocks such as natural disasters as well as social, economic and political shocks. Both ecosystem resilience and social resilience are critical for a society's ability to survive and continue to develop.¹²⁷ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) introduces the term hazard in their definition and how a system can resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to transform and recover from its effects in an effective manner.¹²⁸

2.1 Disaster Risk Reduction builds resilience

Resilience is connected to the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The meaning of DRR can be described through a short allegory from the private sector. Within the private sector, the concept of business continuity is to engage in proactive approaches to minimise the effects of shocks and stresses on the core business activities. Businesses identify critical functions and their interlinkages in order to find the weak links of their operations and either reinforce them or create backup systems. A risk is managed before it becomes a disaster in order to support business

¹²⁵ Sida (2016).

¹²⁶ Adger (2000).

¹²⁷ Stockholm Resilience Centre (2019).

¹²⁸ UNISDR (2012).

continuity. Within societal development, this concept could improve the resilience of a community but is often overlooked. Development policies often focus on managing the shocks from a disaster, rather than to build to withstand these.

2.2 Climate Change Adaptation includes resilience and DRR

As part of the discourse around climate change the term “Climate Change Adaptation” (CCA) is also used. CCA builds on resilience and DRR. In global resilience discourse, as the UNISDR definition suggests, resilience is primarily engaged through the DRR perspective. Due to the uncertainty of climate change, the traditional DRR is now often combined with the ideas of CCA. CCA builds on the same rationale as DRR to evaluate and manage hazards but also includes the uncertainty factor of climate change. Food and water security are common topics within DRR, but in CCA their long-term management, as well as their interlinkages with sustainable development, is granted additional focus.¹²⁹

DRRs are thus actions taken with the goal of preventing new risks, reducing current risk and managing residual risk. These actions contribute to strengthening the resilience of the targeted community. DRR often consists of early warning systems; a combination of hazard monitoring, forecast and prediction as well as an assessment of the disaster risk. This is combined with channels to spread knowledge of the risk, as well as the preparedness of communities, business and governments to take action in time to mitigate the hazardous event.¹³⁰ Hence DRR can also be included in infrastructure planning, in governance policy and in building institutions ready to act both to mitigate the effects of the hazard as well as to quickly remedy damages after the event has occurred.¹³¹

¹²⁹ UNISDR (2019).

¹³⁰ Wisner et al., (2014).

¹³¹ UNISDR (2017).

2.3 Building resilient societies through DRR: practices from the African Risk Capacity

While it is impossible to predict the exact timing and magnitude of droughts in sub-Saharan Africa, it is still a frequently occurring hazard which affects agricultural production in many countries. The magnitude and frequency of droughts are predicted to increase which adds to an already severe need for DRR. Conventional disaster response is mainly composed of ad hoc projects which are deployed after the disaster has become a fact. Governments then have to allocate funds from essential development budgets, which further delays the response, with the ultimate cost of lives lost, assets depleted, and development gains ruined. To act when the disaster has become a fact is estimated to be four times more expensive than to have credible and well-planned response mechanisms ready to deploy at the first sign of a hazard.¹³²

While the droughts occur frequently, they also tend to strike regionally, which means that while one region suffers from drought, the other regions are enjoying an average harvest. Realising the advantage of sharing the risks of drought between states in the region is the rationale behind the establishment of the regional agency, African Risk Capacity (ARC). ARC allows each member state to pay an annual premium in order to participate in an insurance scheme for the region. The premium is determined after an analysis of the risk of the country. A contingency plan is developed for the individual specific settings of a country which are linked to early warning systems. When these warning systems are triggered ARC delivers a pay-out to the member country which enables them to launch pre-emptive interventions before the affected populations engage in negative coping actions such as unplanned migration.¹³³

Instead of forcing each country to have all the funds ready to deploy if a drought were to strike their country, they now only have to pay a part as an insurance premium for the same level of protection. ARC estimates that the member countries save around 50% by this *risk pooling* than if

¹³² African Risk Capacity (2019).

¹³³ Ibid.

each country would manage their own risk funds. The savings can then be invested in long-term development and resilience-building policies.¹³⁴

ARC offers a good example how a functional DRR may work in practice. When the disaster is avoided the development of the society can continue at the same projection and people will not have lost their livelihoods. A disaster that did not occur because of preventive measures is a victory for all parties involved, especially for those affected communities who do not suffer any losses and can continue their lives in their homes. The ARC exemplifies that DRR can be more than building cyclone shelters, as described below, but can also build capacity to pool scarce resources into effective safety nets which prevent disaster.

3. Strong institutions as a foundation to build resilience

It is evident that there is a need for resilient and climate-adapted societies to make it both desirable and possible for populations to stay in their communities. Resilient societies identifies risks and hazards through a process of DRR and CCA to build a buffering capacity and an adaptive capacity to recover from shocks and undesirable changes.

It is also evident how important strong institutions are in order to carry out the processes needed to build a resilient and habitable society. The 16th Sustainable Development Goal, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, empathises the role of strong institutions for sustainable development “*Developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*” (16.6). Strong institutions create opportunities for societies and economies to grow. Inclusive and transparent governments build citizens’ trust in their leaders, and a diverse and free media keeps citizens informed and enables them to hold their leaders accountable for decisions and results. Weak institutions often increase

¹³⁴ Ibid.

corruption and the mismanagement of public funds, which takes precious resources away from governments' goals.¹³⁵ In 2018 the World Economic Forum (WEF) estimated that world corruption amounts of 5% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or \$3.6 trillion.¹³⁶ In combination with corruption, weak institutions also undermine tax administration and capable public finance management which could have been used to fund DRR and CCA but also society-building public goods such as social safety nets, maintaining long-term fiscal sustainability and pursuing socio-economic development.¹³⁷ Institutions do not necessarily have to be governmental bodies but can also be informal arrangements of labour sharing and the management of local public goods to larger intergovernmental organisations such as the Mekong River Commission or the ARC. Institutions can also be the arrangement of land ownership.

3.1 Mainstreaming DRR and resilience: practices from Bangladesh

While Bangladesh is one of Asia's most hazard-struck countries, it has also become a symbol of effective DRR management. Since the 1970s DRR projects have constructed cyclone shelters, which are estimated to have saved countless lives.¹³⁸ Storms are by far the deadliest hazardous events in Bangladesh and are responsible for 95% of the casualties over the last decade. While it is widely recognised that cyclone shelters are perhaps the most successful DRR programme there are still unmet needs.¹³⁹ In 2017 Faruk et al. counted 2,500 cyclone shelters along the 710-km coastline of Bangladesh¹⁴⁰, however, the UNISDR estimates that 5,000 shelters would be needed to ensure storm protection for everyone at risk.¹⁴¹ However, due to limited resources and a vast array

135 OECD (2015).

136 Johnson (2018).

137 OECD (2015).

138 Novaký and Aysan (2012).

139 Faruk et al., (2017).

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid; UNISDR (2017).

of problems little has been done to build shelters in the last decade. Other more pressing issues have taken prevalence in DRR/CCA projects. Although floods only kill a few people each year, they cause around 80% of the average annual loss (AAL). In AAL, an estimation is made on the expected losses per year associated with the occurrence of future disasters assuming a very long observation timeframe. Calculating the AAL enables funds to be directed on the perils which will have the most significant impact on the overall socioeconomic development of a region.¹⁴² Compared to building cyclone shelters the DRR/CCA of floods in Bangladesh is a much harder problem to solve, and, as with many disaster-struck countries, weak institutions makes problem-solving harder.

The Bangladesh government has had a history of being passive when NGOs and foreign donor organisations have conducted projects in the country. An example of this is the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF) in which donors channel funds to Bangladesh through the World Bank.¹⁴³ However, critique was raised by Bangladeshi civil society organisations that the World Bank takes a significant fee in the management of the fund.¹⁴⁴ This led to a situation in 2009 when the Bangladesh government initially refused to accept a £60m climate funding offer from the United Kingdom if it was being channelled through the World Bank and would rather have seen it channelled through the UN. In recent years the Bangladesh government has made efforts, spurred on by both civil organisations as well as donor organisations, to work more closely with NGOs which has served to mainstream DCC/CCA in national policies. Examples of mainstreaming include that water conservation now is a precondition in all development planning and that local officials and university students are receiving training in disaster management. By 2021 Bangladesh aims to have mainstreamed DRR/CCA in every level of governance, knowing that it will be a requirement for sustainable development in a hazardous region.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² PreventionWeb (2019).

¹⁴³ The World Bank (2012)

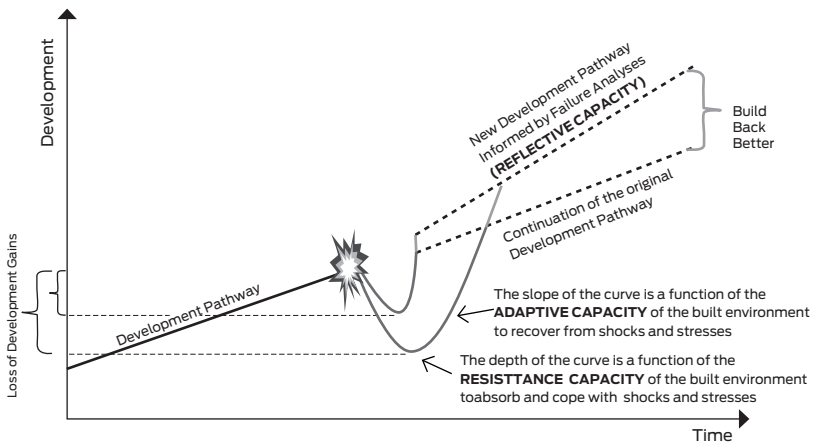
¹⁴⁴ Shamsuddoah and Chowdhury (2009).

¹⁴⁵ Wazed (2015).

4. Disaster recovery: time to build back better?

Could there be anything good coming out of a disaster? There might be actually. In fact, in the DRR discourse there is even a common assumption that the post-disaster recovery phase presents a chance to remedy the weakness of a system which failed to withstand the hazard. The different “development pathways” after a disaster can be illustrated by Figure 1 below, found in the United Nations Operational and Project Services (UNOPS) Guidelines for Implementing the Resilience Pathways Model (RPM).

Figure 1. UNOPS, Guideline, Implementing the RPM, Nov 2017



The disaster forms a break in the development pathway and the ‘dip’ can be deeper depending on the resistance capacity and the adaptive capacity of the society to recover. The capacity to recover makes a direct impact on the migration flows from the disaster – especially the resistance capacity.¹⁴⁶ The sort of ‘window of opportunity’ for a ‘build back better’ from a disaster builds on the idea that the disaster has brought exposed weak links in the system, and that various stakeholders may come together in their shared awareness of these risks in order to remedy them.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ UNOPS (2017).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Understandings from Sri Lanka and the rebuilding after the 2014 Tsunami as well as the 2009 Victorian Bushfires in Australia, show us that the quality of the rebuilding will range from the very good to the very bad. To ensure that the relief aid is actually well invested it can be wise to allocate funds to quality supervision as well as to develop plans for how to build back better already prior to the disaster in cases where the weaknesses are identified. Incentives to build back better should be given to households and organisations engaged in rebuilding.¹⁴⁸

However, the reality in a disaster is that there are many obstacles which may distract or disable a system from rebuilding itself stronger. The most prominent of these are the humanitarian principles of addressing acute human suffering in the wake of a disaster. While ensuring to take steps in order to prevent the disaster from reoccurring is common, priority is often given to remedying acute needs rather than rebuilding a stronger foundation for the system.¹⁴⁹

When examining why some societies rebound faster and stronger, it becomes evident that the outcome is largely dependent on the structures which were in place before the disaster occurred.¹⁵⁰ If the society is organised in agencies with top-down management and watertight boundaries toward each other, it may aggravate the creation of holistic solutions to complex problems.¹⁵¹

A resilient system might not have been able to mitigate the disaster, but if the knowledge already existed about the perils, even if it had been impossible to implement the remedies before the disaster, it might be possible to do so afterwards. Once again it is a problem with weak institutions which may make societies unable to rebound better from a disaster.¹⁵² Unfortunately competent human resources and strong institutions often take a long time to build, but these are essential in order to build back better after a disaster.¹⁵³

148 Mannakkara and Wilkinson (2013).

149 Mannakkara and Wilkinson (2013).

150 Woods (2015).

151 RISE (2019).

152 Novaky and Aysan (2012).

153 Woods (2015); RISE (2019).

5. The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a roadmap to a resilient future

Coming back to the notion of sustainable development and the SDGs in relation to resilience it is worth noting that there is a distinction between resilience and sustainability. Both concepts are essential in achieving the SDGs but could be seen as taking opposite approaches towards reaching the goals.¹⁵⁴ Sustainability is to maximise efficiency and reduce impacts – on – the environment: natural, economic or social. Resilience on the other hand is to maximise capacity to withstand impacts – from – the environment: natural, economic or social.¹⁵⁵ Another distinction to make is that a resilient society is what is called a club good, meaning only those who are included in the society, benefit from it. Thus, while a sustainable society can be a global common good since it may decrease its impact on the rest of the world as well as the society where it is implemented.

The 11th Sustainable Development Goal about Sustainable Cities and Communities, emphasises the need of increasing the resilience of the cities and communities through DRR and CCA efforts in vulnerable communities:

“11.B, By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels”.

It also points at the need for the world community to:

*“11.C, Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials”.*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ UNOPS (2017).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals.

To mitigate the risk of climate-driven migration from vulnerable societies, these societies must either be improved to a level where they are able to build enough resilience to cope with the impact of climate change, or to effectively fight climate change with such an effort that its impact can be mitigated by even the most vulnerable societies. Today's increased occurrence of extreme weathers, such as tropical storms and high average temperatures, tells us that climate change is already upon us and that merely fighting it will not be enough to mitigate the risks for vulnerable societies. Climate adaptation must be increased in these societies at a quicker pace than the increasing effects of climate change. There is otherwise a risk for further climate induced disasters, which could lead to increased migration. For societies expected to receive migrants displaced due to climate change one strategy is to invest in climate change adaption, sustainable development and increasing the resilience of vulnerable societies.

Climate-induced hazards, such as flooding or droughts, are common factors in both DRR and CCA, but hazard exposure varies considerably between different regions in the world. Coastal areas are, for instance, exposed to storms and rising sea levels as well as a saline intrusion in coastal ecosystems and aquifers. The urbanisation trend drives more and more people to cities, and a large portion of those are located in coastal areas. It is estimated that 40% of the world's population lives within 100 km of the coast. Over the last decade, more than 60% of the world's disaster losses occurred in coastal areas.¹⁵⁷ Lowlands and islands are particularly exposed to climate hazards, but it is the ability to cope and adapt to the risks that determine the country's *vulnerability*. As a risk in climate discourse is often defined as a function of hazard exposure and vulnerability to it,¹⁵⁸ developing countries, such as Tuvalu and Bangladesh, have a higher risk than richer countries, like the Netherlands. Many of the world's megacities, e.g. London, New York, Tokyo and Shanghai, are all exposed to rising sea levels but have a lower vulnerability than their poorer counterparts, such as Dhaka, Lagos and Jakarta.¹⁵⁹ The social

¹⁵⁷ DasGupta and Shaw (2016).

¹⁵⁸ Wisner (2014); Brooks et al., (2011).

¹⁵⁹ Uitto et al., (2017).

dimension also has a strong effect on vulnerability. More impoverished people with fewer means and political power have a decreased ability to cope and recover from disasters. They are also to a greater extent living in more hazardous areas such as informal settlements on denuded slopes.¹⁶⁰

6. Conclusions and recommendations

It is in the interests of donors to development aid programmes to strengthen the institutions of vulnerable societies in order to build resilience against climate-change-induced disasters and other negative impacts. This investment could prevent massive human suffering from forced migration and also significantly decrease the challenges faced by societies receiving migrants.

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals is a roadmap towards a better future where less people will have to migrate due to the consequences of climate change. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals should continue to be a foundation for European and national development policies.

Policy recommendations

In line with the 11th SDG; *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, the EU should increase its efforts in reducing people's vulnerability to climate change. This can be done by putting efficient adaptation programmes into place in societies in where climate change is projected to cause severe impacts on people's livelihood. Climate change will affect regions differently and where the determinant to migrate or not is dependent on their capacity to adapt. By investing in climate adaptation strategies in line with

¹⁶⁰ Surjan et al., (2016).

the 11th SDG, the EU can mitigate the need for international migration.

To promote resilience in line with the 11th SDG; *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, DRR and CCA should be given a prominent role in development aid.

To promote resilience, development programmes should:

- (1) identify weak points in core and critical systems;
- (2) reinforce these in order to improve the system's ability to withstand and recover from shocks and stresses; as well as
- (3) ensure that knowledge is gathered from past and future hazards and disasters in order to continue to improve the affected systems.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ UNOPS (2017).

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Conclusions and recommendations

The way forward

By Hedvig Heijne and Therese Lindström

Climate change threatens the most basic human needs. As with war and violence, climate change has an impact on people's livelihood and can deprive them of their freedom. This report has highlighted the complexity in predicting how climate change will have an impact on migration over the next decades. However, climate change is today already driving migration. It is therefore evident that climate-driven migration will be part of our future too. This makes it only fair to take meaningful action to prevent, prepare and respond to the challenges of climate-driven migration.

For the past few years, we have seen an increase in European populist and anti-immigration parties. This has contributed to a less prosperous environment in dealing with the issue of climate-driven migration, leading to solutions characterized either by ignorance or a short-term perspective. Climate change and migration poses a fundamental challenge to our society. It is our responsibility as a society to plan and prepare for this challenge. Climate-driven migration is a reality that requires a vision, values and international long-term commitments. The EU should rise to the challenge and promote solutions guided by our shared values: freedom and human dignity. As the world changes, the EU needs to lead. It should seize this opportunity to think, plan and develop a holistic approach for the future. The EU's action will set a standard and inspire other regions to take responsibility for the challenge that we all have contributed to.

The international community has for some time recognized the challenge of climate-driven migration. The Protection Agenda from the Nansen Initiative and the TFD are two successful steps forward in

addressing displacement in connection to climate change and disaster, by representing a joint international will to address the issue. However, as Elin Jakobsson concludes, there are still no set of efficient measures in place to address the challenge. People displaced across international borders due to climate change still lack adequate legal protection. The GCM and the GCR are promising venues to develop solutions to address these types of migration. The compacts acknowledge the challenges faced by groups displaced by climate change. However, they are not legally binding and their impact on the field remains to be seen. From an EU-perspective, the interest in climate-driven migration has been moderate and the discussions have yet to lead to any concrete action in addressing the challenge. As presented in Jakobsson's report, the lack of a unified definition, the wide scope of the issue, the absence of appropriate venues to take actions on climate-driven displacement, and the sensitivity of providing rights to others are some of the explanations why there has been a general inaction in addressing the issue.

Climate change, with its impact on people's livelihoods and settlement, is neither a temporary nor a future phenomenon, but rather an ongoing, long-term challenge with far-reaching international causes and consequences. The complexity and the diversity of the phenomenon, as well as the historically weak efforts by the international community, and the reluctance to properly deal with the issue, should not be a hindrance to finding further solutions. With this publication, we hope to raise awareness and provide policymakers in the EU and at the international level with a sound base for understanding the issue and plausible recommendations for how to deal with climate-driven migration.

Below is a selection of conclusions and recommendations from the two reports written by Elin Jakobsson and Research Institute of Sweden (RISE), which policymakers should take into account when addressing climate-driven migration:

- 1. Remembering that climate change and migration are transnational.** Climate-driven migration cannot be properly

addressed unilaterally. There is a need for long-term solutions and international collaboration.

2. There is no “one-size-fits-all solution”. Climate-driven migration covers a wide range of causes, mobility patterns and casualties. An adequate response must include different types of measures and solutions.

3. Find a common language and unified terminology and strengthen the protection for people displaced by climate change. One solution that has been put forward to better address climate-driven migration is enhanced protection for people displaced by climate change. Calls for enhanced protection for the group have stranded, due to the lack of a clear and universally agreed definition and a coherent understanding of the diverse scope of the issue. However, it is difficult to find one protection mechanism that covers the whole diversity of the phenomena of climate-driven migration and displacement. One way forward is to have different tracks covering the diverse group of people displaced by climate change:

(1) One track consists of groups which might already be covered in existing regional and national frameworks, even without specific reference to climate change. Such groups are migrating workers or those fleeing climate-induced conflict. The recommendation for policymakers in the EU would therefore be to ensure that the **existing standards are safeguarded.**

(2) One track consists of those who need to be **relocated from areas that are no longer inhabitable.** The recom-

mendation for policymakers in the EU would therefore be to assist international humanitarian organizations and exposed states with **resettlement-like solutions**, where appropriate.

- (3) One track for people **forcibly displaced due to natural disasters**. The recommendation that follows would be to recognize natural disasters as a cause of forced displacement – and thus a provision to attain protection status in some form – in national and regional frameworks. The EU could consider developing protection status within the frames of the new EU Qualification Directive. For the most acute phase after a disaster, the EU could assist people and states in need by finding safe spots. This could be done through the provision of temporary permits, humanitarian visas and humanitarian assistance.

A broader European protection definition would put the EU in the forefront of protection issues for current and future migration flows. The action would send a signal to the international community to start addressing the issue and to take responsibility for the humanitarian needs of those affected by climate change and its consequences. If the EU wants to continue to be the global leader in climate action, there is a need for a European holistic approach that addresses climate change and migration.

4. **Ensure safe pathways to safe places to relieve further pressure on climate “hot-spots”**. As climate change consequences worsen globally, there might be reasons for the international community and the EU to provide international protection or resettlement, even when internal displacement is an option. This protection measure would assist already vulnerable states

suffering from negative impacts of climate change. Providing protection or resettlement would relieve pressure on local resources and ecosystems and decrease the risk of resource-related conflicts and social unrest, hence, preventing further migration and displacement.

5. **There is a need for a common venue to discuss and negotiate action on climate-driven migration.** The UNFCCC and the UNHCR have been important but inadequate forums to achieve substantial action on climate-driven migration. Policymakers in the EU are recommended to make use of the Global Compacts as appropriate venues to take action on climate-driven migration.

6. **The 17 Sustainable Development Goals should continue to be a foundation for European and national development policies.** Climate change will affect regions differently, and where the determinant factor to migrate or not is dependent on their capacity to adapt. The EU should increase its efforts to reduce people's vulnerability to climate change through continued investment in climate adaptation strategies.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

POLICY APPROACHES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The adverse effects of climate change drastically alter people's living conditions in many parts of the world. When they can no longer maintain a secure livelihood, migration may be the only option. While the international community has for some time recognized the challenge, there are still no efficient measures in place to address the challenge. People displaced across international borders due to climate change still lack adequate legal protection.

This publication examines how the international community and the EU have dealt with the issue and what has hindered them from taking meaningful action to prevent, prepare and respond to the challenge. What are the policies needed to adequately address the diverse and wide scope of the phenomena? And, in what way can the EU make use of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to better address the issue? The authors make recommendations about how we can deal with the challenge both today and in the future.

Climate-driven migration is a reality that requires a vision, values and international long-term commitments. We hope that this report will stimulate debate, raise awareness and inspire policymakers in the EU and at the international level to take action in addressing this challenge.