Global Summary Note

Background

Since 2018, the Climate, Migration, and Displacement Platform (CMDP) has brought together civil society organizations, climate and migrant justice advocates, and experts from across regions, levels of governance, and thematic areas, to discuss ways to better address climate change impacts on human mobility. In 2023, in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), CMDP's Steering Group members organized four regional consultations—in Latin America, the Pacific, Africa and South & Southeast Asia—focused on human rights-based approaches to addressing climate-related displacement risk, displacement, migration, planned relocation and immobility. To give visibility to the key gaps and needs surfaced at each consultation, delegates from each region will convene in Bonn for SB58 and in Geneva for the Human Rights Council 53rd Session to advocate for urgent action and sufficient support and resources from the international community to facilitate stepped-up, coherent and rights-based approaches to climate-induced mobility at national and regional levels.

In-person civil society consultations were held in Panama City (April 12-13, led by Alianza Americas and CWS in partnership with FES Central America office) and in Addis Ababa (May 10-11, led by ACT Alliance and CWS, in partnership with FES-FMCC in Addis). Virtual consultations were held for Pacific Islands civil society (April 26 & 28, led by UUSC and Pacific-WIN), and South and Southeast Asia (May 23, led by OKUP Bangladesh, Water Initiatives-India, and CWS).

The consultations aimed at grounded discussions of ways to advance policies that are coherent, adequately resourced, and inclusive of gender justice and the human rights of vulnerable populations. Participants in each consultation reflected on variations on these questions:

1. What are the impacts of climate change on displacement and migration in your country or sub-region? (With additional questions on who is particularly vulnerable and why)
2. What human rights threats and vulnerabilities do people face in migration and displacement, and what are the impacts of climate change on these vulnerabilities?
3. Laws, policies, and practices: What exists? What are key gaps at the present? What may become significant gaps, 20 or 30 years in the future, given climate change projections?

In addition to challenges and gaps in existing frameworks, regional consultation participants discussed respective national and regional priorities for action to address the most pressing climate/mobility challenges identified, and an outcome brief was produced following each consultation. These briefs will be used by participants to guide national- and regional-level advocacy for policies and implementation that that actually reaches communities at the local level, and meets the needs and ensures the participation of people and communities who face displacement, who have migrated, been displaced, or relocated, or who are affected by the migration of others from their households and communities, including those constrained by immobility.

The four regional briefs stand on their own. This global summary seeks to extract common themes and messages that bear highlighting in the international climate negotiations in Bonn and at the Human Rights Council in Geneva to illustrate the urgent need for concerted action and support at multiple levels including the international level. These include the **need for adequate climate finance for both adaptation and loss and damage** from countries responsible for the vast majority of historic and current emissions and from innovative sources, as well as the **need for participatory, inclusive, whole-of-society approaches to policy-making at all levels**. These must include the voices and address the needs of all sectors of the population, and in particular those who are traditionally marginalized or excluded—women, children and youth and especially girls, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, LGBQTI+ persons, Indigenous, rural and other communities with resource-dependent livelihoods, as well as migrants and displaced people, who may be particularly difficult to reach (among others).

Key Messages

1. **There is an urgent need for coherent, inclusive, rights-based policies to be formulated and for them to be adequately resourced and implemented.**

Overall, and relative to the urgency of the situation given escalating impacts, the gaps are huge and growing. While starts have been made in some countries in most regions, with more progress in some places than others, much more robust action is urgently needed in every country and region (and sub-region) as well as at the international level. Lack of political will at multiple levels of governance, lack of general respect for and protection of rights including land rights and access to services, and lack of resources including climate finance for adaptation and loss and damage are obstacles that must be overcome now.

2. **Policy approaches must center dignity and rights, and must address not just present and short-term needs, but also provide for participatory planning for durable outcomes that allow people—especially including those who are typically most marginalized and consequently most vulnerable—to live sustainably with respect for their dignity and rights.**

Policies need to address measures that enable people to stay where they are, safely and sustainably, whenever possible, as well as measures that enable people to move in safety, dignity, and respect of their rights when they choose to do so, or when they have been forced to flee.

Across regions, there was agreement that neither rights to stay nor rights to move in dignity is being adequately addressed:

- *Right to stay*
  Direct displacement risks and risks to livelihoods and resource access (including land and water) are rising, sometimes rapidly, due to climate change impacts such as increasingly frequent and severe storms and flooding, heatwaves, droughts, changing precipitation patterns, as well as salinization and storm surges associated with sea-level rise. But lack of access at local level to resources and information necessary for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and adaptation is a huge barrier to safety, wellbeing and enjoyment of rights, especially for the most vulnerable sectors of the population. While staying—or returning after displacement—may not always be possible, it is often the preferred option. Supporting people's and communities' efforts to strengthen their resilience ability to adapt in place is fundamentally about respect for and protection of human rights, including collective rights.

- *Right to move in safety and with dignity*
  Despite increasing policy attention to the role of climate change on human mobility, legal and policy developments are lagging behind in all regions, and implementation on the ground where it matters is all but non-existent, not to mention implementation of measures that would make a difference on the ground. The actual conditions facing many people displaced internally by disasters, as well as those compelled to move internally from rural-rural or rural-urban areas, put them at high risk. Often people move from one vulnerable situation into another, where discrimination and unsafe informal accommodation and informal work as well as consequences of family separation and other risks to rights are prevalent. Those displaced by disasters are often left to fend for themselves, and may be forced move onward (internally or across borders). People affected by this kind of "distress migration" are highly vulnerable but often unable to access support for many reasons including that they may not have (or may have lost) identity and other documents needed to access services.

There have been policy developments, mainly at regional levels, to address climate-related cross border movement. These efforts, however, run up against a counter trend to increase barriers to cross-border migration, which is evident in several regions. This perpetuates the lack of regular migration pathways for those who need them and has led to greater securitization and militarization of borders. International migrants are routinely criminalized and treated as if they do not have human rights. There is no general right of admission to another country for persons crossing borders for climate change-related reasons, and progress implementing Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) provisions to expand regular migration pathways to address people's needs for rights-respecting migration options is limited. Regional free movement regimes are a promising mechanism to address the need for cross-border movement in some regions.

3. **Serious data and research gaps need to be addressed, not just to meet the needs of national-level planners, but also for members of impacted communities.**

Lack of data on climate impacts and of direct and indirect effects on movement is a barrier to good, inclusive and participatory planning and policy development.

At local level, there is great need for data to better understand (1) climate impacts; (2) how these interact with other drivers of migration/displacement and affect patterns of movement, disaggregated and recognizing distinct challenges of different segments of the population; and (3) what these changing patterns mean for the livelihoods, wellbeing, and enjoyment of rights of the people involved (those moving, those left behind, those in communities receiving or hosting new arrivals), households and communities.

Many people do not have access to early warning systems and information to help them prepare for imminent hazards. Longer-term, many whose livelihoods are climate-dependent do not have access to information on how climatic conditions are anticipated to change, even though changes are already affecting their livelihoods and ways of life. There is a need for actionable, accessible information about climate change impacts, so that people, households and communities are able to make informed plans about their futures. At the same time, there is also a great deal of local and indigenous knowledge that needs to be better incorporated into research and planning. Communities need to be engaged not only in consuming but producing data on relevant impacts, including how changes and anticipated changes are having on people's and communities' physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

Additional Shared Challenges and Gaps

1. In addition to the lack of data, **the lack of resources, lack of coherent policies and plans, and failure to connect with, involve, and get resources to the local level are major barriers** to both (1) enabling people to find ways to stay and communities to sustain themselves, and (2) protecting people who are forced or compelled to move, by providing options and solutions that respect and protect their rights and dignity as well as the rights and dignity of others affected by their movement.

2. **Climate impacts are a factor in much rural-urban migration, but many cities are unprepared to receive and provide services to new arrivals.** Many people displaced or migrating to cities end up in informal settlements lacking safe accommodation and basic services and sometimes prone to flooding, landslides, or other environmental/climate risks, and in informal work lacking basic labor protections.

3. **Across regions, loss of livelihoods due to both slow-onset and extreme events, and repeated events such as floods and storms, are a key driver of displacements and migration**. Sometimes loss of livelihood leads to temporary migration to seek additional income. Sometimes, though, it leads not only to permanent moves (migration or planned relocation) but also to loss of traditional ways of life, sometimes involving both economic and non-economic loss and damage.

    Livelihoods may be progressively eroded by slow-onset changes, but crops and means of livelihoods (including livelihood-related assets as well as natural resources) can also be destroyed by sudden-onset events, preventing people from sustaining themselves after a disaster and/or from being able to recover and rebuild. Increasing incidence of drought, heat waves and water scarcity, as well as floods, are affecting livelihoods in ways that may force or compel people to move. In Africa, for example, pastoralists are increasingly unable to find sufficient pasture to sustain their traditional livelihood and way of life.

4. **People who move (internally or across borders) due to loss of livelihoods are often not recognized as "displaced" or treated as deserving of support and assistance in transit or in places where they seek temporary work,** despite the fact they may be moving in precarious circumstances, and subject to labor exploitation and trafficking, unable to find decent work.

5. **Resources for adaptation and disaster risk reduction are needed at local level, particularly in rural communities, but have not been forthcoming**. At the international level, developed countries have not met their existing commitments to provide adaptation finance, and the commitments are not even sufficient to meet needs. At the national level, there has been insufficient progress in most countries to develop coherent national strategies and policies, in general, but especially regarding the support and protection of migrants and displaced people, and in getting what resources are available to the communities where they are needed.

6. **Local communities are often left on their own after extreme events.** While it is well known that investments in DRR pay off, there is a need for better, more coordinated DRR planning, and in particular for facilitating DRR efforts at local level. In many places there are insufficient resources for local-level disaster risk reduction and preparedness efforts.

7. **To date, planned relocation schemes have rarely met people's needs for sustainable futures.** Efforts at planned relocation have often fallen very short for many reasons, from lack of resources, to non-participatory planning processes, to inadequate consideration of what kinds of physical and social infrastructure and livelihood opportunities people want and need in order to reconstruct valued aspects of community

life. Participation from all sectors of the population including women, men, children, youth, elders and elderly, and people living with disability is critical.

8. **Insecure land rights and tenure issues complicate many attempts to address climate-related mobility issues equitably and sustainably.** In several regions, land tenure issues (e.g., land grabs and dispossession including of Indigenous and rural communities' lands, landlessness, insecure land tenure) are a big issue for many people, whether they are literally losing their land or are facing high displacement risk in their current location. Laws mandating reparations or compensation may be in place but depend upon holding land title, which prevents people and households that have lost land to which they do not have clear title from accessing compensation and sufficient resources to enable safe migration or planned relocation. People may be unable to make claims that would provide resources for adequate resettlement and rehabilitation measures to enable adaptive and resilient outcomes. Important coastal commons such as beaches are also being lost to sea-level rise and erosion related to extreme weather.

9. **Competition over water and other resources is stoking conflict** in some situations, sometimes rekindling past conflicts, including over pastoralists' access to water and pasture. Scarcity of land and water resources are also affecting those who have been displaced and/or are seeking to relocate and need access to land resources to do so.

10. **Out-migration is harming or jeopardizing the social fabric and community cohesion**, including in ways that affect capacity for community-level action. Remittances may be useful but, in many places, they are used to support basic consumption needs rather than investments in adaptation. Family separation and related effects on those of different ages and genders can create different kinds of risks and burdens for household members who migrate and for those who remain.

11. **Both temporary labor migration programs (TLMPs) and permanent out-migration** have implications for origin communities and particularly for those whose household members have gone. While in some regions, people will wish to seek opportunities for temporary labor migration to boost earnings and skills, there was agreement across regions that there will also be a need and must be opportunities for people in communities becoming uninhabitable to immigrate permanently (including through international versions of planned relocation). When men migrate and women are left behind in communities facing environmental risks and resource challenges, they frequently face increased productive and care responsibilities. TLMPs may be useful for some, particularly if they provide skills and training that can be useful upon return to the community of origin, but in general they are not a long-term adaptation solution. The availability of permanent migration options may also have implications for the social fabric in communities of origin.

Divergences and Regional Differences

Climate change impacts as *the* cause—or as a trigger, or in combination with other conditions in places of origin?

The Pacific regional consultation reflected the centrality of climate change as *the* driver of forced displacement and migration, reflecting the fact that there are places, and ways of life, that already face existential threats from climate impacts, where adaptation interventions—even if significantly better resourced and planned—will not be sufficient. Small island states due to their geography including their exposure and small territory are at particular existential risk.

To varying degrees, other climate vulnerable countries with small territories and/or high population densities face related challenges; Indigenous communities, pastoralist communities and others whose livelihoods and ways of life are fundamentally tied to land that is becoming less habitable are also at particular risk. However, in other regions like Latin America, climate change impacts are recognized as a growing factor and trigger that is exacerbating existing risks people and communities already face, which in combination constitute complex human rights violations and threats to their ways of life.

Latin America consultation participants described a combination of climate change impacts and vulnerabilities produced by extractivist development policies, leading to "difficulties identifying the environmental or climate change component in the factors that force people to abandon their places of residence." Many people in Indigenous, rural and Afro-descendent communities experience a lack of state protection and services, combined with an extractivist economic development model that is not conducive to living safely and with dignity; gangs and organized crime, corruption, and smugglers complicate the situation, and the criminalization of migration makes migrants and displaced people easy prey. The Asia and Africa consultations surfaced a variety of scenarios related to different climate change impacts and hazards interacting with other migration and displacement drivers and sources of vulnerability.

Priorities for Action

Climate finance for both Adaptation and Loss and Damage. Developed countries need to deliver grant-based adaptation finance as part of the $100B/year commitment; this is already overdue. The international community needs to come together around a fit-for-purpose Loss and Damage Fund that, together with other funding arrangements, is able to provide adequate resources for those suffering climate change loss and damage. Developed country grant-based contributions and innovative sources of finance will be critical for covering types of loss and damage, including but not limited to non-economic loss and damage (NELD), for which risk-based insurance instruments are not suitable. The New Collective Quantified Goal must include sufficient funds for both adaptation and loss and damage.

National governments in the four regions must step up work on coherent climate, environment, migration, DRR, rural and urban development, and other policies and strategies across relevant departments that mainstream a rights-based and evidence-based approach to addressing climate-related human mobility (and immobility) and the needs of migrants and those who have been displaced and/or relocated. Strategies to develop and implement coherence policies must be multi-level and engage subnational/local authorities as well as all sectors, but particularly the most vulnerable sectors, of impacted communities. At national, regional and international levels, governments must find the political will to address the gaps in law and policies to protect people moving across borders in the context of climate change.

In support of coherent national policymaking, as part of the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, members of the Task Force on Displacement together with other Expert Groups (WIM NELs EG, LDC EG, WIM A&S EG) are currently developing technical guidance on (1) averting, minimizing and addressing NEL in the context of human mobility (including impacts on indigenous or local knowledge, societal identity and cultural heritage); (2) integrating linkages between human mobility and climate change into national planning processes; and (3) accessing climate finance for averting, minimizing and addressing displacement.

Looking Forward

There is now widespread recognition of the need for a better understanding of current climate-related migration and displacement patterns, as well as for understanding how these will be evolving as climate change impacts increase—under various scenarios as mitigation, and different types of DRR, development, adaptation and loss and damage measures are or are not pursued. But some aspects have been clearly articulated. One is the need for actionable, accessible information at local level. Another is greater understanding of the changing climate on the outcomes over different time frames for people who move, and for people who are affected by their movement (household and other community members left behind, communities through which migrants and displaced persons transit, and places in which people stay and settle). Needs change over time after disasters, after people move (whether fleeing sudden-onset extreme events or migrating in search of livelihoods), in places people have moved from and where others are trying to stay, and as climate impacts increase across all of these situations.