

Declaration on Climate Induced Displacement

Preamble

We, the representatives of civil society gathered at International Civil Society Week 2017 held in Suva, Fiji between 4-8 December 2017:

Acknowledging that climate change is one of the most pressing challenges our planet faces, which impacts people's ability to realise human rights and sustainable development for current and future generations

Noting the impacts of climate change are often felt first, and hardest, by those countries and communities with the least responsibility for the crisis and with the least capacity to respond or adapt, including small island states in the Pacific and other vulnerable regions

Acknowledging that these impacts fall most upon people in vulnerable situations in our societies, indigenous peoples, minorities, older persons, children, persons with disabilities, women and persons whose basic economic necessities are unfulfilled, and that there is a legal obligation and moral imperative to act in a people centred and rights focused manner,

Reaffirming the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Climate Agreement adopted under the Convention, and calling on all Governments, International Organisations, the private sector and Civil Society Organisations to undertake ambitious action to achieve the goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels

Also noting the leadership of many least developed countries and small island states, particularly those in the Pacific and other vulnerable regions in committing to deep and long-term cuts in emissions

Calling on developed countries to continue to take the lead in mobilizing climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels, noting the significant role of public funds, including through the provision of adequate, predictable and stable climate finance

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that climate change impacts, directly and indirectly, the enjoyment of human rights. Conversely, failure in ensuring the enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum of the available resources of each nation, compounds and worsens the vulnerability of communities to climate change impacts

Noting that States have an obligation to take effective measures to prevent and redress climate impacts, and therefore, to mitigate climate change, without ignoring their obligation to also ensure that all human beings have the necessary capacity to adapt to climate crisis

Affirming that climate justice requires that climate action be consistent with existing human rights agreements, obligations, standards and principles

Recognising that the impacts of climate change are a driver of “human mobility” inclusive of migration, displacement and (planned) relocation, and that displacement and migration will continue and increase as climate impacts worsen. That climate change represents an existential threat to some communities and countries, particularly in small island states, the Pacific and other vulnerable regions threatening their traditional livelihoods, well-being, mobility and culture

Recognising that communities that have their human rights guaranteed and fulfilled at home are at a lower risk of needing to move as a result of climate change impacts, and acknowledging that internal or international migration as a response to climate change is a policy of last resort. Where migration must occur ‘migration with dignity’ represents best practice, being the provision of skills, opportunities and community in host countries, or home country if displacement is internal

Taking note of the ongoing process for the development of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration due to be adopted in 2018 which must address climate change as a driver of migration if it is to be forward looking and robust. Emphasizing that the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration focuses on international migrants only, and that the needs of persons internally displaced by climate change must also be addressed in a rights-respecting manner

Calling on States, and International Organisations to recognise climate change as a key driver of migration in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, with affected populations needing long-term solutions including expanded migration channels. That the compact recognises that human rights obligations must be respected regardless of an individual’s migratory status, and that the human rights of people migrating due to climate change impacts should form a core component of policy responses to climate displacement in compact

Further calling on States negotiating the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration to engage and include the voices of those impacted by climate displacement in the process of negotiation to ensure that the policy response meets their needs and new norms are developed to address policy gaps

Declaring that we, the representatives of International Civil Society Week 2017 in conjunction with the Pacific Islands Development Forum call on the international community to include the following in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration:

- Recognition that climate change is included as a driver of internal and international displacement
- Commitment to fulfil the objectives of the Paris Agreement, to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, will significantly reduce the number of people who are required to move due to climate change.
- Reaffirmation that the UN human rights treaties and regional human rights treaties provide an agreed-to legal basis for action for States Parties, and acknowledgement that

an explicit integration of such instruments into the global compact will enhance its effectiveness

- A commitment that where people are compelled to move as a result of the impacts of climate change, their rights under international human rights law will be recognized and upheld, including non-refoulement, self-determination, non-discrimination, and the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to which they are entitled
- Recognition that building resilience is a critical aspect of reducing climate driven migration and that countries and regional organisations must ensure that communities at risk of slow onset and rapid onset events have key human rights (such as the rights to food, water, housing, health and work) protected to reduce the likelihood of the creation of conditions that would necessitate migration.
- Commitment to consultation and engagement with impacted communities where adaptation and resilience programs cannot prevent climate-induced displacement, forcing relocation. And, where return is appropriate, how “Building Back Better”, in keeping with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, should be implemented.
- Commitment to those who are most vulnerable to climate displacement, including coastal and small island communities, indigenous peoples, minorities, older persons, children, persons with disabilities, women and persons whose basic economic necessities are unfulfilled as people in need of particular protection.