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Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS in Bonn)**

**SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage: Ideas for work streams and areas of discussion up to
and beyond COP18**

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Prepared for Party consideration in the lead-up to COP17 at Durban

Keywords: SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage, risk management, human migration, displacement and planned relocation, climate adaptation, climate change, Cancun Adaptation Framework, risk reduction and prevention, mobility solutions

PLEASE COMMENT: This submission has benefited from the feedback and ideas of many different experts and delegations. We welcome your comments.

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1. Introduction

The Cancun Adaptation Framework (contained in - /CP.16) suggests that the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) make recommendations on loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change including impacts related to extreme weather events and slow onset events to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration at COP18, as well as to strengthen international cooperation and expertise to understand and reduce such losses. At the SB 34 in Bonn the SBI noted a number of approaches for addressing loss and damage. In this document (see para 4), the SBI took note of the importance of addressing the following thematic areas in the implementation of the work programme:

- (a) Assessing the potential for loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change and the current knowledge on the same;
- (b) Examine a range of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather events and slow onset events, taking into consideration experience at all levels;
- (c) Address the role of the Convention in enhancing the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

Purpose of this submission

UNU contributes views in this submission about the major possible elements for the SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage, as articulated in paragraphs 25 – 29 of Draft Decision - / CP.16. and as suggested at SB 34 in Bonn. This submission provides ideas about what Parties can achieve leading up to and in Durban at COP17 this year, and activities that can be included in the SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage. UNU also offers ideas about achievable milestones in the Work Program to COP18 and after that time.

This submission contains examples for policy perspectives that could help shape activities around climate induced displacement and migration¹.

The Work Program on Loss and Damage should be an ongoing process of supporting

implementation activities related to loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change¹.

Advance understanding of and the reduction of loss and damage

On an ongoing basis², the SBI Work Program will strengthen international cooperation and expertise to understand and reduce loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather events and slow onset events³ which may include effects on human mobility. The SBI Work Program will catalyse existing and future activities on loss and damage through exchange of ideas between Parties and experts. The SBI Work Program provides a useful avenue for relevant stakeholder organizations to signal what kinds of actions would be needed from Parties to catalyse action (e.g. provision of data about risk, information about ongoing and planned risk management priorities or actions, etc.); and for Parties to signal what kinds of knowledge gaps they would need filled.

Knowledge gaps in the research about environmental change, migration and displacement includeⁱⁱ:

- Environmental processes that trigger migration: There is not yet a widely agreed and measurable definition of human mobility linked to environmental change. This contributes to the already difficult task of compiling accurate data sets or precise figures across scientific studiesⁱⁱⁱ.
- The process of environmental migration itself: More evidence-based research is needed to characterize the drivers in origin areas (e.g., livelihood insecurity, environmental hazards, conflict, demographic pressures, gender inequality, etc.) and the pull factors in areas of destinations (e.g., demand for labour, aging population).
- More understanding is needed about what combinations of factors lead to human mobility enhancing resilience of affected people, or undermining resilience. This will add to the analysis of the role migration and displacement may play in the future as the impacts of climate change become are expected to become more pronounced.

¹ Para 26

² e.g. leading beyond COP18, with a time period to be defined or open ended as appropriate

³ Para 25

2. Promote the prevention and minimization of loss and damage

Disaster risk management and reduction are featured in the Cancun Adaptation Framework along with the para on human migration and displacement (paras 13 -14). Loss reduction spans the range of rapid- and slow-onset hazards that can cause loss and damage. Activities related to loss and damage must be viewed as part of a climate risk management strategy that includes, first and foremost, activities that prevent human and economic loss and damage from climate variability and extremes. Activities and ultimately the recommendations by the SBI to COP18 should underscore the need to design and implement all activities with an aim to prevent and reduce loss and damage, including minimizing the impacts of climate change on human mobility where it is not voluntary. A range of measures will be needed, but all should work towards the goal of risk reduction and take into account the principles of the Hyogo Framework of Action. All actions should strive to complement and enhance the ability of National Platforms under Hyogo to prevent and reduce loss and damage at the national and sub-national levels. Additionally, recommendations by the SBI Chair will consider what activities under the Convention can catalyse prevention and reduction of loss and damage internationally, and in areas where concerted international efforts can fill gaps which individual governments—especially in vulnerable countries—may struggle to fill alone. The SBI Chair could recommend support for disaster risk reduction and conflict mediation strategies while strengthening humanitarian responses. This could help governments take action to reduce the risks people face from acute crises arising from natural disasters and competition over resources leading to conflict, and pre-empt crisis situations.

3. Provide a framework for activities⁴ that lead to implementation of measures to reduce loss and damage

The Work Program will, through workshops, events and other modes as appropriate, support SBI with information so that it is in a position to make recommendations on loss and damage to

⁴ such as events and workshops as appropriate, para 26

the Conference of the Parties for its consideration at its eighteenth session⁵. This may be an avenue for provision of further evidence and recommendations related to human mobility in the context of environmental and climatic change. The UNFCCC process may benefit from views about what activities are already being undertaken, what innovative new approaches are possible to design (both under the Convention and outside of but in harmony with it), and what kinds of activities may remain unrealistic for the foreseeable future (or what kinds of criteria would be needed to make such activities possible). The SBI Chair could recommend:

- Identify guiding principles, effective practices and institutional frameworks to help governments in developing appropriate laws, policies and programs to address environmentally induced internal and international migration. Current laws, policies and institutional arrangements are inadequate to deal with complex movements of people. Of particular concern is the possibility that large numbers of people may be rendered stateless if rising sea levels inundate island countries and low-lying, densely populated delta areas. Guiding principles are needed today to shape thinking about how to manage potential larger-scale relocation in the future.
- Policy frameworks and institutions that address environmentally induced migration: A few examples of policy frameworks addressing this issue are available, such as temporary protection status (TPS) in the United States and Europe or principles and soft laws for protecting people who have been displaced by environmental events. Yet beyond humanitarian approaches for rapid-onset extreme events, there are significant governance gaps. Complex and slow onset events could pose a major challenge to legal and governance frameworks, in part because responsibility and temporal limits are difficult to assign. Moreover various institutions that deal with different issues related to the impacts of climate change may have a tendency to operate in “silos” and may approach issues such as climate change within narrow sectoral perspectives.

6. Conclusions

⁵ Para 29

Research has substantiated the fact that environmental change is one of a larger set of factors that affect human migration and displacement worldwide. Processes such as natural disasters and shifts in climate patterns which may bring glacial melt, sea level rise and desertification are and will increasingly affect migration and displacement. Some of the most vulnerable regions include areas like low-lying islands and deltas, coastal areas, areas dependent on glacial-fed water systems and areas subject to persistent drought. Field-based research suggests that most environmentally induced migrants and displaced people will move within their own countries. Some movements will resemble familiar migration and displacement patterns, but other movements will likely occur under emergency circumstances or complex humanitarian crises, particularly where climate change exacerbates natural hazards, such as cyclones, and communal violence and conflict.

This paper outlined a process by which research and the humanitarian community helped bring these issues to the UNFCCC climate negotiations process. In 2008 a combination of factors contributed to drawing policy maker attention to migration and displacement in the context of climate change. From 2009 and moving forward, research will continue responding to Party questions about migration and displacement and operational organizations will offer insights about the implications of climate change on resilience and vulnerability of populations of concern. With the inclusion of climate induced displacement, migration, and planned relocation in the Cancun Adaptation Framework, many new windows of opportunity have opened for work on the issue.

Key messages

- The topic of human mobility has appeared for the first time in a decision of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC. The issue is couched in pragmatic, solution-oriented terms under adaptation, reflecting the realization of Parties following the IPCC's 4th Assessment report that the impacts of climate change are highly likely and may already be manifesting themselves in different regions of the world. Migration, displacement, and planned relocation are featured in the Cancun Adaptation Framework as technical issues in a part of

the text which highlights a list of activities that may qualify for adaptation funding in the future.

- Opportunities for moving practical solutions and discussions forward in UNFCCC process through Cancun Adaptation Framework (para 14(f)), Climate Finance and the Adaptation Committee, and through the SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage. These and other policy processes will likely catalyze nationally and regionally driven work on the topic of migration, displacement, and planned relocation in the context of climate change.

Key gaps

- Emerging dialogue focusing on existing tools, but risk that emerging issues related to human mobility and climate change may introduce needs that are not addressed by existing tools and institutions
- Likelihood that – at least in the medium and longer term – that humanitarian response could be overwhelmed by growing disaster-related displacement. Possibility that disaster risk reduction and measures to avoid loss and damage may not keep pace with the rising and potentially permanent changes associated with desertification, sea level rise, ocean acidification, loss of geologic and other freshwater sources, etc. which can add pressure to human mobility. This underscores the need for new thinking about managing and planning for the impacts of climate change upon human mobility, ranging from migration to displacement to relocation.
- Related to these two points, there is a need for longer term planning mechanisms related to human mobility which may be difficult to attain in context of voluntary, non-binding international cooperation.

Now that migration and displacement have been highlighted in the UNFCCC climate negotiations, policy makers increasingly ask “what do governments need to know about the potential impacts of climate change and human mobility in order to prepare their own appropriate legal, institutional, and governance approaches?” The potential scale of future movements may require support for those countries and communities most affected by internal and immediate cross-border environmental migration as less and least-developed countries may not have sufficient capacities or resources to manage or respond to such flows. The next

few years will provide opportunities to fill knowledge gaps and support decision makers with more and better quality information about the role of environmental factors in the combination of issues that affects human migration, displacement, and planned relocation.

4. UNU will support Parties in achieving milestones in Work Program on Loss & Damage

- Upon Party request, UNU will **provide case studies of countries related to migration and displacement** (particularly Guatemala, Peru, Ghana, Kenya, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries). These case studies could include an overview of major recent weather-related natural catastrophes with the collaboration of Munich Re's NatCatService, the world's largest database on natural catastrophes. The studies could also contain a section on policy considerations around migration, displacement and planned relocation specific to that country.
- Provide an **overview of terminology and measures used to address migration, displacement and planned relocation and ways to reduce loss and damage associated with climate change, at side events and expert meetings**
- Prepare a **policy brief** on migration and displacement, based on a new program on rainfall variability, food security and migration worldwide, and a UNHCR - UNU study of climate change, refugees and food security in the Horn of Africa
- Support the Climate Change, Environment, and Migration Alliance (CEEMA) in preparing a **glossary on key terminology** related to human mobility in the context of climate change
- Continue to coordinate and work with CEEMA to **bring views of practitioners, experts, and humanitarian organizations to delegates** in the UNFCCC process
- Provide a panel of **experts to discuss and answer delegate questions about the use of a variety of risk management tools in the context of adaptation**, for upcoming negotiations sessions in Durban, SBs, etc.

Further, if Parties express a desire for the following, UNU volunteers to

- **Co-organize a workshop** on a relevant theme, as appropriate and desired by Parties.

- **Co-organize a series of training workshops** to support delegates in familiarizing themselves with technical terms, different ways of managing migration and displacement in the context of changing environmental conditions, etc. together with other relevant stakeholder organizations. These training sessions could be organized as desired immediately before sessions or relevant SBI Work Program workshops to capitalize on participants' time.

5. Conclusions and way forward

In summary, activities undertaken within the context of the SBI Work Program on Loss and Damage from SB 34 to COP18 should focus on building understanding of delegates about assessment of risks, the range of approaches that could address loss and damage, and possible roles of the Convention.

Leading up to COP18, delegates should define a process to discuss solutions, focusing on what is needed and what implementation ideas could be further explored after COP18. A draft text around these issues could be prepared for decision at COP18.

ⁱ Martin, S., and Warner, K. (2010). Climate change and migration: Findings of the transatlantic study team. German Marshall Fund Study Team on Climate Change and Migration, German Marshall Fund, September 2010. <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/gmf>

ⁱⁱ Stal, M., Warner, K. (2009) The Way Forward Researching the Environment and Migration Nexus. Research Brief based on the Outcomes of the 2nd Expert Workshop on Climate Change, Environment, and Migration. 23 - 24 July 2009, Munich, Germany. United Nations University. ISSN: 1816-5788. October 2009; Warner, K. and Laczko, F. Migration, Environment and Development: New Directions for Research. International Migration and Development. Continuing the Dialogue: Legal and policy perspectives. Joseph Chamie and Luca Dall'Oglio (Eds). IOM and Center for Migration Studies. ISBN 1-57703-047-8. New York and Geneva. pp: 235-253.

ⁱⁱⁱ Further, governance issues arise related to definitions: Some refer to "environmental refugees" while others refute that the word "refugee" has a specific legal meaning in the context of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. See Castles, S. (2002): Environmental change and forced migration: making sense of the debate In: *New Issues in Refugee Research*. Working Paper No. 70. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva; Dun, O. and Gemenne, F. 2008 "Defining Environmental Migration", *Climate Change and Displacement*. *Forced Migration Review* 31:10-11.