



Climate Change & Development (CCD) Community, of the Pacific Solution Exchange



Consolidated Reply

Query: Promoting Economic Migration as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Experiences; Advice.

Compiled by Setaita Tavanabola, Research Assistant

Issue Date: 24 June 2014

From Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Posted 31 May 2014

Dear members,

According to the International Organisation for Migration, climate change will trigger an estimated 200 million to 1 billion people to migrate by 2050. It is likely that the impacts of climate change on migration will be particularly prominent in certain "hotspots", including: atolls; urban areas; coastal, delta and river communities; and drought prone locations.

The Pacific includes a large number of people living in these "hotspots", but how will climate change impact migration patterns in the Pacific? There is a high level of uncertainty related to the expected human impact of climate change (on land security, food security, water security, human health, etc.) in the Pacific, and even more uncertainty on how the impacts of climate change may impact migration patterns.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific or ESCAP has commissioned a study to examine the issue of climate change and migration in the Pacific. This work is part of the ESCAP, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme joint project, "Enhancing the Capacity of Pacific Island Countries to Manage the Impacts of Climate Change on Migration" funded by the European Union.

This study aims to provide an initial overview of the information currently available on climate change and migration in the Pacific. We would like to seek your feedback on the following:

- **Do you have specific feedback on the draft report:** [click here to view](#) (PDF; 1.17MB). Below is the breakdown of the report in Chapters.
- **Do you think that promoting opportunities for economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy?**

- **How can migration as an adaptation strategy be reflected in a national planning environment? What about climate change displacement? Should it be reflected in the National Sustainable Development Strategy or the Joint National Action Plan or both?**

For slow internet connections here is the breakdown of the draft report in Chapters:

[Executive Summary](#) (PDF; 135KB)

[Chapter I Background](#) (PDF; 111KB)

Climate change implications in the Pacific; Policy responses to climate change in the Pacific; Terminology; Overview of existing studies on migration and climate change in the Pacific

[Chapter II Synthesis of findings of key analytical documents on climate change and migration in the Pacific](#) (PDF; 516KB)

Causes of climate change related migration; Likely migrant source areas; Likely migrant destinations; the costs and implications of climate change migration; Opportunities presented by migration in the context of climate change response; Box 2.2 Migration with Dignity

Chapter III Country Profiles

[Federated States of Micronesia](#) (PDF; 252KB); [Kiribati](#) (PDF; 250KB); [Nauru](#) (PDF; 193KB); [Palau](#) (PDF; 245KB); [Papua New Guinea](#) (PDF; 192KB); [Marshall Islands](#) (PDF; 247KB); [Samoa](#) (PDF; 193KB); [Solomon Islands](#) (PDF; 193KB); [Tonga](#) (PDF; 193KB); [Tuvalu](#) (PDF; 250KB); [Vanuatu](#) (PDF; 194KB)

[Chapter IV Discussion and Recommendations](#) (PDF; 157KB)

- Likely 'hotspots'; Urban areas; Urban Atolls; Atoll communities (non-urban); Some urgent cases; Coastal, delta and river communities; Drought prone locations;
- Recommendations
Immigration policy development; Information needs; Gender; Research methodologies; Remittances and adaptive capacity in the Pacific

[References](#) (PDF; 287KB)

I would greatly appreciate your views as climate change experts.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Prof. Matthew Kahn](#), Institute of the Environment, Department of Economics & Public Policy, University of California, Los Angeles, USA
2. Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji: [Response 1](#); [Response 2](#); [Response 3](#); [Response 4](#); [Response 5](#);
3. [Prof. Robert McLeman](#), Geography & Environmental Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
4. [Bruce Burson](#), Immigration and Protection Tribunal, New Zealand
5. [Dr. Eberhard Weber](#), Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji
6. [Jon Sward](#), Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
7. [Prof. Andrew Geddes](#), Department of Politics, University of Sheffield

Further contributions are welcome!

[Summary of Responses](#)
[Comparative Experiences](#)
[Related Resources](#)
[Responses in Full](#)

Summary of Responses

Jillian Campbell from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific prompted the discussion on 'Promoting Economic Migration as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy'. Members commented on the draft report that reviews available literature on migration and climate change in the Pacific, and discussed whether and how economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy.

Overall, members see the draft as a very good outline of the current understanding and identification of areas for further work. The report makes a very powerful, rigorous and evidence-based contribution to understanding the complexity between climate change and human migration in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Members also mention that there is an emerging body of research that provides important insight into these connections which policy makers can draw from when considering options. Further targeted research would help explore emerging issues and address significant knowledge gaps.

Members began the discussion with specific feedback to the report saying they would like to see the report reflect on how essential solutions within PICs should be favoured i.e. any policy addressing climate change and migration need to be explicitly on an equal footing between PICs and their metropolitan neighbours.

Where the report mentions relocation processes needing to be more participatory and to consider human rights, a member suggests the section should also include recommendations on the nature of the policy dialogue as this would set frameworks. He adds that when reflecting on vulnerability, human rights, and marginalisation it may be useful to be concrete and reflect on how amongst the countries in discussion are seen as potential destinations for Pacific Islanders losing their homes. The authors may like to highlight an assessment of the refugee policies in Australia and New Zealand in the report.

The fourth point under subsection titled, 'Summary of Pacific islander perspectives on climate change-related migration...' a member feels that this may be exaggerated. Many leave their countries, voluntarily detaching themselves from their ancestral land when given the opportunity. Though one cannot deny the importance of land however, the importance of land becomes less through the transition to white collar jobs, and finally migration.

The argument in page 21 saying that 'while many observers state that other Pacific Island destinations would be the best options in terms of environmental and cultural similarities...' is illogical according to a member. He argues that countries such as Australia and New Zealand have their own climate change initiated challenges. He disagrees that many migrants will move to urban areas as many currently earn their living from fishing and agriculture and at least initially many would continue with these activities elsewhere.

On the paragraph about cases of relocation in page 24, a member argues that people from Rabi are positive about their resettlement as well as the people that relocated from Phoenix Island to the Western Province of Solomon Islands. Reports show that the people feel they are in a better

situation than their parents and grandparents were before the relocation. The story of Nauru rejecting relocation is correct however the colonial context is left out. Essential background information helps readers understand why the people of Nauru did not give their home away to Australia.

Referring to Chapter 2 under subtitle 'Opportunities presented by migration in the context of climate change response', a member believes that it is far too academic to say that migration is a strategy to spread risk because most people in the Pacific migrate to improve economically and socially. Quite often migration enhances risks for example, environmental risk of people living in squatter settlements in Suva who select risky locations unwanted by others, people who overstay in Australia and USA – is seen as a risk taken to maximize economic outcome.

Finally, the report is essentially dealing with three main types of migration – international migration, rural-urban migration, and planned community resettlement. A member suggests that it may be worthwhile to create expanded sets of policy recommendations that are specifically tailored to each of these three areas; as the report already highlights each is quite different and implied different interactions between policy actors i.e. governments, donors, civil society, international nongovernment organisations, community leaders, etc.

The second question found all members who responded agreeing that promoting opportunities for economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy however, at the same time carefully analyse the challenges that come with it.

PICs are not alone in experiencing highly dynamic migration systems that affect the vulnerability of those left behind, and even in a system where migrants are free to move where and when they want, a member points out that migration may not be beneficial to the communities left behind. Therefore promoting opportunities for economic migration can be considered a climate change adaptation strategy but it won't be successful for everyone, it should be a small part of a broader adaptation strategy.

The draft report refers to a growing body of evidence members say make an impressive contribution that economic migration does and will continue to allow people to sustain their livelihoods. Migration can thus be seen as a form of adaptation and not as a failure to adapt. This does raise policy challenges. International migration is on a smaller scale than internal migration and there are significant policy challenges associated with the issues because of sovereignty issues particularly in major destination states. Members advised for measures to be taken at regional level to facilitate migration promoting income diversification that allows people to sustain their livelihoods and help offset more significant challenges in the future if migration routes are closed off. There is a need to know more about the effectiveness of existing schemes with regards to the transfer and use remittances.

Another member highlights that the major incentive to migrate in the Pacific has been of economic nature and has to be considered. The strategy must be to create capacities that people have choices of whether they wish to migrate and if so, where they wish to migrate. Without these capacities people not long into the future might need to leave their homes, but do not have choices as they do not have the capacity making them refugees. And while activists often label these potential migrants as 'environmental refugees' a member suggests the term 'job seekers'. The term 'environmental refugees' implicitly implies the group are passive victims who lack freedom of choice but instead, this group has suffered a nasty shock to their origin location's quality of life.

Giving some thought to the third and final question of how migration as an adaptation strategy be reflected in a national planning environment, members believe that first and foremost it is

essential to empower those who may need to relocate i.e. bringing the debates and discourses to the local level and listening to the concerns and priorities of people. Members stressed that this should be done much more than it is happening right now because without these inputs it is difficult to draft any plan. It is also essential that on an international level there is equity about stakeholders as right now there is an unhealthy power relationship on several levels i.e. within PICs and developed countries at the rim.

To end, the draft report stressed the need for action now. Members believe this is not a challenge for the future and failure to respond effectively now may lead to more difficult-to-manage situations in the future. It is crucial to start thinking on a number of challenges in order to be able to envision change that comes slowly.

Comparative Experiences

United States of America

A Nation of Immigrants, USA (from [Prof. Matthew Kahn](#), *Institute of the Environment, Department of Economics & Public Policy, University of California, Los Angeles, USA*)

International migration represents a trade in the labor market featuring sellers and buyers. Wages rose for certain tasks in the US to which the country welcomed immigrants willing to work at these jobs for market wages; while incumbent workers in the potential destination location prefer to not face this competition, the world economy is made richer by encouraging the re-allocation of people to their highest and best use.

From [Prof. Robert McLeman](#), *Geography & Environmental Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada*

That Special Place worth Rebuilding, New Orleans

Despite being hit by hurricanes and flooded out dozens of times, New Orleans keeps getting rebuilt. Its geographic setting is untenable and unviable – culturally, United States without New Orleans would be a far poorer place. Likewise, Pacific Island communities where a household's economic wellbeing and its cultural/social status are tied heavily to real property, households will resist relocation even when to the outside observer it seems inevitable or in their best interests.

Vulnerability of those Left Behind, East Canada

Pacific Island Countries and Territories are not alone in experiencing highly dynamic migration systems that affect the vulnerability of those left behind. East Canada experience high rates of out-migration by young people who maintain their social connections to their home communities – remitting money to their parents, returning for jobs. However, there are those who rarely come back even for a visit and family members left behind are a little less resilient thereafter.

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

Climate and Human Migration: Past Experiences, Future Challenges (from [Prof. Robert McLeman](#), *Geography & Environmental Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada*)

Book; by Robert A. McLeman; December 2013;

Preview available at: www.cambridge.org/mcleman

In Climate and Human Migration, Dr. McLeman offers accessible explanations of this tremendously complex association - convoluted processes become understandable.

Clusters and Hubs: Towards a Regional Architecture for Voluntary Adaptive Migration in the Pacific (from [Bruce Burson](#), Immigration and Protection Tribunal, New Zealand)

Book; by Bruce Burson & Richard Bedford, Nansen Initiative on Cross-Border Disaster-Induced Displacement, Geneva; 2013.

Available upon request.

Paper is an example of bringing together existing knowledge and understanding on cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and identify and respond to gap areas by promoting new research.

Environmentally Forced Migration from Pacific Island Countries: How many? Where from? Where to? (from [Dr. Eberhard Weber](#), University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji)

PowerPoint Presentation: by John Campbell, University of Waikato, New Zealand; June 2014;

Available at: [Click here to view](#) (PPT; 4.8MB)

It has reference to the Projected Atoll Populations 2009 figures which is also referred to in the draft document however, not reflected in the table on page 17.

Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities

(from [Jon Sward](#), University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom)

eBook; the Government Office for Science; London, UK; 2011

Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287717/11-1116-migration-and-global-environmental-change.pdf (PDF; 6.1MB)

Recommended Contacts and Experts

Hein de Haas (from [Jon Sward](#), University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom)

International Migration Institute, Oxford Department of International Development, 3 Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB, United Kingdom; Web: www.heindehaas.com;

Co-Director of the International Migration Institute, his research focuses on the links between migration and broader processes of development and social transformation, primarily from the perspective of migrant-sending societies.

Recommended Tools and Technologies

Adam Smith's Invisible Hand Theory (from [Prof. Matthew Kahn](#), Institute of the Environment, Department of Economics & Public Policy, University of California, Los Angeles, USA)

Theory; by Adam Smith, Scotland.

Definition: www.adamsmith.org/adam-smith

Smith realised that social harmony would emerge naturally as human beings struggled to find ways to live and work with each other. Freedom and self-interest need not produce chaos, but – as if guided by an 'invisible hand' – order and concord.

Responses in Full

Prof. Matthew Kahn, Institute of the Environment, Department of Economics & Public Policy, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Dear colleagues,

In question 2, do you think that promoting opportunities for economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy?

Yes, migration is a key option that allows individuals to implicitly insure themselves against new risks posed by climate change.

The economic theory of migration posits that potential migrants will predict what their net income would be in each possible destination area and what would be the cost of moving to that destination. This cost will include both the out of pocket expenditure to move this distance and the lost social network and local knowledge from leaving one's current location. The rational migrant will choose that destination that maximizes her income net of migration costs. The person's income at each possible destination will depend on the person's skills and the going wage and unemployment rate for people with these skills at the destination.

Climate change impacts the quality of life of both the migrant's origin and potential destination locations. For example, suppose a farmer's profits decline because of changing weather patterns. If such a farmer can move to a nearby city and find gainful employment then this farmer suffers little due to climate change. In fact, if climate change accelerates urbanization then it could unintentionally accelerate economic growth!

The tougher issue arises for smaller nations in which there are few domestic migration urban alternatives. Reducing political barriers to international migration will be an important part of helping nations to adapt to climate change. While activists often label these potential migrants as "environmental refugees", I prefer the term "job seekers". The term "environmental refugees" implicitly implies that this group are passive victims who lack freedom of choice. Instead, this group has suffered a nasty shock to their origin location's quality of life. If this group has the legal ability to choose from a set of alternative destination locations then they are not "victims".

The United States is a nation of immigrants. The US welcomed this group in large part because of labor demand. As wages rise for certain tasks in the US, the nation is eager to welcome immigrants who are willing to work at these jobs for market wages. My point is that international migration represents a trade in the labor market featuring sellers and buyers. The sellers are the migrants and the buyers of labor services are the destination nation's firms. While incumbent workers in the potential destination location prefer to not face this competition, the world economy is made richer by encouraging the re-allocation of people to their highest and best use.

Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand" will play a key role here. For areas that experience a major climate change shock, the potential migrants need to be informed about the opportunities available to them in other nations. Nongovernment Organisations can play this role and then should trust the free market to direct such migrants to the best location given their skills and destination area local labor market conditions.

Institutions such as the United Nations can play a role facilitating small loans for allowing migrants to finance their moves to new destination areas. Such liquidity constraints could preclude the gains to trade that I have sketched. The key point is that migration breaks the link between shocks to places and individual wellbeing. A person who can move to "higher ground" has a greater likelihood of having a fulfilling life even in the face of climate change.

Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear Matt,

Thank you for the comments. Your comments are exactly aligned with our intentions in the implementation of the European Union funded project on climate change and migration.

Prof. Robert McLeman, Geography & Environmental Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Hello,

I have a long-standing interest in the impacts of climate on migration dating back to the 1990s, when I was living and working in Hong Kong.

Let me start my complimenting Jillian Campbell and team on a very well-written and thoughtful report. It does a nice job pointing out what is known and not known about the present and future situation faced by residents of Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Before you read the following comments, please keep in mind that I have no first-hand experience of any of the PICs mentioned in the report (save Australian and New Zealand). Also, I live in Canada and, with the exception of Fijians of Indian origin, we have very few migrants in Canada from the PICs in question. With those caveats, here are a few comments.

The report makes a distinction between migration and settlement relocation/abandonment. These two phenomena are connected to one another, but are very different when talking about climate change risks. Migration can potentially contribute to adaptive capacity building (see below), while relocation/abandonment suggests adaptive capacity is insufficient or overwhelmed. Migration can help build capital (economic, social, human and cultural) while relocation or abandonment results in a loss of capital. Especially in communities where a household's economic wellbeing and its social/cultural status are tied heavily to real property (homes, land, businesses etc. that are not easily moved), households will be exceedingly resistant to relocating, even when to the outside observer it seems inevitable or in their best interests. There is also often an institutional predisposition to resisting the relocation of people unless absolutely essential (especially again, where the political system is controlled by people with interests inland). A good example is New Orleans – despite having been hit by hurricanes and flooded out dozens of times, it keeps getting rebuilt. And, having been to New Orleans, I hope it keeps getting rebuilt even if its geographic setting is untenable and unviable in the long run – culturally, a US without New Orleans would be a far poorer place. I suspect many PIC residents feel similarly about their special places. One final note on abandonments/relocations: the research on past cases shows that those who are relocated and do so relying on governments for assistance typically fare poorly compared with people who relocate autonomously (I describe several examples in detail in my new book, here's the link www.cambridge.org/mcleman – please excuse the shameless self-promotion).

The report does a nice job of observing that voluntary labour migration can, under the right circumstances, potentially help build adaptive capacity in the communities left behind. These 'circumstances' can, however, vary considerably from one community to another or even one household to another. I work in communities in eastern Canada which experience high rates of out-migration by young people right after they finish high school. Some of these out-migrants maintain their social connections to the home community, visit regularly, remit money to their

parents, and, in some cases, return home if employment opportunities come up. For other households, the young migrant rarely comes back even for visits, and the family members left behind are a little less resilient thereafter. It's ok when the parents are themselves still of working age and in good health, but as they reach retirement and/or health concerns arise, their vulnerability to extreme weather events, power outages, etc. increases.

Two points, therefore: (1) PICs are not alone in experiencing highly dynamic migration systems that affect the vulnerability of those left behind (2) even in a system where migrants are free to move where/when they want, migration may not be beneficial to the communities left behind. So, to the question, "Do you think that promoting opportunities for economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy?" my answer would be that it can, but it won't be successful for everyone – it should be a small part of a broader adaptation strategy.

My final comment is on freedom of movement, within PICs and to international destinations farther afield. Those PICs that have through colonial or historical ties some form of right of abode in an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country are fortunate, but such residency does not always confer citizenship (or the rights that go with citizenship). I would encourage those that do have right-of-abode agreements to seek to negotiate citizenship options, where possible. For those that do not, I would encourage them to seek labour migration agreements and student visa arrangements with the US, Australia, New Zealand, etc but also with non-traditional partners like Canada or the EU generally (and not just the present/former European colonial powers). Even if such agreements end up not being used, I think it is useful to expand the number of states that have a vested interest in the wellbeing of PIC populations.

Right now, for example, most Canadians have virtually no knowledge whatsoever of PICs, and could not easily name one. It is difficult to get Canadians (who are among the world's greatest per capita greenhouse gas emitters) to care about the fate of PICs; PICs are almost an abstract concept to Canadians. In my experience, bilateral agreements tend to get more domestic media attention here in Canada than UN/multilateral agreements.

I may have more thoughts later, but there's a few small ones.

I hope to see the report finalized and published so I can start referring to it.

Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear Robert,

Thank you for the comments. I appreciate your reference to the different outcomes of migration (particularly the effects on those left-behind). The report is part of a larger project, which involves working at the national level to help countries develop a strategy for integrating migration issues into their joint climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies.

Through this project we are hoping to identify ways that we can maximise the benefits to the left-behind communities (for example, through stimulating remittances and promoting circular migration). I will let you know when we launch our report and add you to our newsletter dissemination list if you are interested.

I will have a look at your book, it sounds interesting. Best.

Bruce Burson, Immigration and Protection Tribunal, New Zealand

Dear Jillian and members,

Herewith my comments on John and Olivia's report. A very good outline of current understandings and identification of areas for further work. Here are some minor suggestions regarding emphasis in certain places.

Table 1.1 (p.6) Given the prevalence of fish in the diet of Pacific Islanders and its particular importance for those leading subsistence lives, one factor which you may wish to consider including here is the migration of fish-stock away from current areas due to sea warming and ocean acidification. This will also impact on livelihood security. The report seems to refer to this at page 18, paragraph 2 but not at this point.

Last paragraph (p.7) You may wish to consider adding that very few refer to migration in the context of adaptation in the Joint National Action Plans and the National Adaptation Programmes of Action, the focus of Petz's study.

Box 1.2 (p.9) There seems to be a word missing here: 'Box 1.2: Key recommendations from policy-orientated'. Under the first bullet point, do you mean 'migration-related strategies' and not 'adaptation strategies'?

Figure 2.1 (p.14) See my comments regarding movement of fish stock.

Last paragraph (p.16) It might be worth mentioning an increased demand for international migration in this context. I think it is important to make this point crystal clear to policy-makers.

C. Likely Migrant Destinations (p.20) Do you not need to say something here not only about direction but also duration? As it stands, this arguably implies permanent migration whereas, temporary or circular migration may also provide an important migration-related adaptation response. You recognize this point in the conclusions and I wonder whether it might be worth making the point here.

First line (p.21) It might be worth noting that the increased vulnerability to environmental shocks and stressor faced by those living in informal settlements increased the risk of them being forcibly displaced in the future. In other words, 'voluntary' migration choices leading to growth of informal settlements in the region can lead to future 'involuntary' forms of movement. This requires policy interventions in areas outside migration policy.

Paragraph 2 (p.21) I am not sure if it has been formally released to states but you may want to reference the study Richard and I have done for Nansen which speaks to this in detail. I can with Hannah if you wish.

Paragraph 1 (p.30) You might want to emphasise here that full participation of both relocated and host communities is critical. Tensions between communities is where many relocation schemes founder.

To view the above comments on the draft document, you can download it from: (PDF; 1.17MB) www.solutionexchange-un.net/repository/pc/ccd/CampbellWarrickPCCMCommentsBBurson.pdf

Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for the specific comments and suggestions.

Best.

Dr. Eberhard Weber, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear colleagues,

I received a copy of the draft report on the *Pacific Climate Change Migration Project* and wish to take the opportunity to commend.

I feel that the draft is very well done. It is really crucial to start thinking on a number of challenge in order to be able to envision change that comes slowly, but therefore also create the impression / danger that there is plenty of time to get into details, policies and even more practical aspects relating to climate change and migration.

Below are my comments to the question statement:

Do you think that promoting opportunities for economic migration should be considered as a climate change adaptation strategy?

The major incentive to migrate in the Pacific has been of economic nature. This has to be considered and the strategy must be to create capacities that people have choices. Choice whether they wish to migrate, and if so, also choice to where they wish to migrate. Without these capacities people not long into the future might need to leave their homes, but do not have choices as they do not have capacities. Then they become really refugees, and if I look around how refugees are treated today (e.g. in Australia, or correctly on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, and Nauru, and at the Mediterranean Coast of Southern Europe, or at the US-Mexican border) I do not wish anybody to become a refugee, also not a climate change refugee.

Economic Partnership Agreement, PACER Plus are silent on movement of labour; movement of merchandise seems to be ok.

Challenges are also huge within the Pacific Island Countries (PICs); when Fiji e.g. wants to send a few teachers to Vanuatu then residence there starts. Still it is essential to keep this aspects in the discussions, both within the PICs as well as with metropolitan neighbors at the rim and also the European Union.

How can migration as an adaptation strategy be reflected in a national planning environment? What about climate change displacement? Should it be reflected in the National Sustainable Development Strategy or the Joint National Action Plan or both?

I think it is essential to empower those who actually might need to relocate. To bring the debates and discourses to the local level, to listen to the concerns and priorities of people. This should be done much more than it is happening right now. Without these inputs it is very difficult to draft any plans. At the same time it is essential that on international levels there is equity about the stakeholders. Right now there is an unhealthy power relationship on several levels (within the PICs, and between the PICs and the so-called developed country at the rim).

In my comments to the draft report I wish to highlight aspects that might be included in the report:

1. Considering that Australia (and New Zealand) have contributed much to greenhouse gas emissions (compared to PICs) causing climate change/sea level rise I feel that their ethical responsibility should be highlighted to support efforts to find new homes for people that might lose their homes where they are living right now. Considering that both countries take some 200,000 immigrants annually it would be possible to provide a home for Pacific Islanders. Your figure of some 350,000 people living on atolls by 2050 (i.e. 35 years from now) suggests that annually 10,000 on average need to find a new home, if we assume that by then resettlement will be completed. Realistically the time frame would be bigger, but the increase in absolute numbers would become smaller assuming that by 2050 a considerable number of people have already left the atolls.

2. Still I consider that it would be better, if solutions within Pacific Islands should be favored, i.e. it is essential to include Government of Pacific Island Countries in reflections of how to meet the challenges. This should be highlighted in the report. There are several reasons why I think that this is essential:

- The neighbor Australia (and to a lesser extent, New Zealand) has been rather strange when it came to the issue of allowing Pacific Islanders to Australia. In the 19th century tens of thousands were brought to Australia (mainly Queensland), often under questionable circumstances (black birding), but soon after the beginning of the 20th century most of them had been sent home (White only policy). Also later Australia had been rather selective when it came to immigration of Pacific Islanders. The country so far had not been willing to express responsibility, and of course is rather eager to keep control over migration flows. The seasonal labour schemes surely bring in many Pacific Islanders, and also help them to gain experience in Australia (and New Zealand) and through rotation many will make this experience (and earn good money), but in the end it will be decided in Canberra and Wellington how long these schemes last, and this decision is done serving exclusively the interest of the big neighbors. I think that the report should highlight that any policy that address climate change and migration need to be explicitly on an equal footing between Pacific Islands and their metropolitan neighbors at the rim of the Pacific (you mention that relocation processes need to be more participatory and considering human rights; this section should include recommendations also about the nature of the policy dialogue as this would set frameworks).
- Assuming that many will leave the islands individually (especially those who are able to find livelihood and acceptance elsewhere), while others are not necessarily welcome in their new homes as they cannot contribute much and might be perceived as a burden to social security systems, government, risk of security, etc. Here the danger is that they become (or are perceived) as refugees. When you reflect on vulnerabilities, human rights, marginalization it might be useful to become concrete and reflect on how amongst the countries that are in discussions are often seen as potential destinations for Pacific Islanders losing their homes, the human rights and conventions concerning refugees are violated. To look into the future requires also to analyze the present. Here enormous improvements are required before I would see that a country like Australia could become a potential destination country for climate change refugees (I agree that the same is with Europe, but this would concern more refugees from Africa and North America). Still I consider an assessment of Australian and New Zealand refugee policies essential in the report, at least a few lines should be there that changes are crucial (at least to establish trust; a few years ago I talked to the President of Kiribati. His idea of migration in dignity

was -among others- influenced by refugee policies of the metropolitan neighbors).

- I see a role for Australia and New Zealand in helping the people of Pacific Islands to obtain capacities, skills to become “useful migrants”, to be able to integrate and contribute to societies and economies to wherever they go. It then should be the choice of the people to make a decision.

3. I would highlight that the challenges of climate change and migration in the Pacific Islands are smaller than in many parts of the world. Even at worst case scenario that by 2050 all atoll populations need to be resettled deals with numbers that are small compared to what one expects to happen in Asia and Africa. To exaggerate the challenges in the Pacific Islands creates hesitation amongst politicians to start working towards solutions. When I read reports of up to 250 million or even 1 billion climate change refugees then the practical consequence in so-called developed countries is to seek solutions of how best to prevent that, they even come close to the borders of these countries. Of course the challenges globally are enormous, but the Pacific Islands stand out not as a worst scenario, but as a region, where it should be possible to solve the challenges as the numbers are much, much smaller than elsewhere. This should be highlighted in the report.

4. A few direct comments referring to particular sections of the draft report:

- Page 4, third paragraph: “Climate change-forced migration is highly disruptive to livelihoods, culture and society”. Suggestion: “Climate change-forced migration will be highly disruptive to livelihoods, culture and society unless proper well planned interventions support people in their effort to adapt to the challenges”.
- Page 11, bullet point 4: I feel that this is highly exaggerated, it is a construction: wherever I look to I see Pacific Islanders who leave their countries when given the opportunity. People who voluntary detach themselves from their ancestral land, people especially from Polynesia, but also Fiji Islanders take the opportunities when they come and even people from Kiribati. I do not deny that the importance of land is greater than elsewhere, but this is also to be seen from the perspective of the livelihood of people, where land in many cases plays a crucial role (as long as they do not migrate). The importance of land to create security becomes less through the transition to white collar jobs, and finally migration.
- Page 11, bullet point 6: I feel that this is often seen in a wrong light, or at least the interpretation could be different. There is a tendency that people who perceive a challenge to their existence as irreversible to resort to religion. What other alternatives do people have who are exposed to the perception we (scientists) give to them that their homes will be submerged in the decades to come? I think the more constructive we (scientists) become the more confidence we create amongst people that the challenges can be mastered, and then the need to trust in good that the unmanageable won't come will become smaller. I discuss these issue frequently with my students from (especially) Kiribati and Tuvalu and here extremely interesting insights happen to me.
- Page 13, third line: I feel it extremely useful and necessary to highlight the speculative nature. Maybe to stress it even more. Of course the danger is that it weakens the arguments, but it is essential to highlight this and to emphasize that more social science (and science) research needed is essential.
- Page 16, footnote 3: the year was 1945 (December 1945) when the people from Banaba reached Rabi

- Page 17, footnote b of the table: there is reference to 2009 figures, but the table does not have 2009 figures (but 2013 and 2050). An earlier paper (presented at the University of the South Pacific has the 2009 figures).
- Page 19, second paragraph, second last line: "with the exception of Fiji". Like other Melanesian countries Fiji also does not have special access to other countries. People from Fiji have to apply for visas, which will be screened like applications from any other countries. People from Cook Island, Niue, Tokelau, Palau, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and all the Pacific Islands Territories have particular access. Also those countries that are part of the Pacific Access Category (PAC) and the Samoa Quota (SQ) have special access, but Fiji is the same as the other Melanesian countries.
- Page 21, after the table, third line: "While many observers..." The argument is not logic. Also countries like New Zealand and Australia will have their own climate change initiated challenges. In these countries also many people live in coastal areas, drought already today is an enormous challenge in Australia. It is also not logic that many migrants will be moving towards urban areas, as many right now earn their livelihoods from primary activities (fishing, agriculture) and at least initially many would continue with these activities elsewhere.
- Page 24, last paragraph, middle: "Apart from the resettlement to Kioa..." I am not sure why the authors consider other schemes as less successful: the people of Rabi today are rather positive about their resettlement although there had been many hick-ups initially. The resettlement from the Phoenix Islands to Western Province in Solomon Islands is surely not a failure. People for e.g. on Ghizo Islands (Titiana) have very similar lifestyles than the local Melanesian population and after the tsunami of 2007 many even added agriculture to their livelihood activities. There are challenges, but compared to the situation as reported from the Phoenix Islands people express that they are in a better situation than their parents or grandparents had been before they came to the Solomon Islands.
- Page 25, Box 2.1: The story that the people of Nauru rejected relocation is correct, but the colonial context is left out. The people of Banaba had been relocated because in the years before World War II increasing dissatisfaction with the destruction of their island had been brought forward to the colonial administration. During the War Japan then occupied Banaba and brought the majority of the population elsewhere (Tarawa, Kosrae, Nauru). When the war was over the British brought the people to Rabi to be able to exploit the resources of Banaba in peace (without the disturbance of people who didn't agree that their island was destroyed). When Australian authorities wanted to relocate the people of Nauru then of course also with the idea to continue phosphate mining there destroying the island. I talked to a number of people from Nauru and their suggestion to why they did not want to leave their island was that they did not want to leave the resources (the wealth of the island) to the colonial powers. When Nauru then became independent in 1968 they had one of the highest per capita income in the world based on the phosphate resources. I think this would be essential background information to understand why the people of Nauru did not want to give their home away to Australia: it was worth billions of dollars.
- Page 27, last paragraph, beginning: I am not sure, if migration is a strategy to spread risk. This interpretation is far too academic. Most people in the Pacific migrate to improve economically and with it socially. I cannot see many cases where there is a deliberate strategy to reduce risk. It is more a strategy to maximize outcome. I even would say that quite often migration enhances risks (e.g. environmental risk of people living in squatter

settlements in Suva, who obviously select locations that are risky, but not wanted by anybody. The choice of unfavorable (and risky) locations provides protection from eviction; or economic risks: I know quite a number of people who overstay in Australia and the USA. This surely is risk, but it is done to maximize economic outcome.

- Page 30, Box 2.3 second last paragraph: The impression is created that the Marine Training Centre (MTC) is an effort to support Migration with Dignity (as a strategy). The MTC has been established in the 1960s when German merchant shipping companies were looking for cheap labour. The MTC is closely related to the South Pacific Marine Services (SPMS) a German recruitment center in Betio, Tarawa, from where the seafarers are hired and directed to their places of employment. Actually a few years back the German companies were considering to close down the MTC and SPMS, but they then didn't. Not yet. The challenge is that with the East extension of the European Union German shipping companies have access to seafarers from East Europe (e.g. Poland), who are a bit more expensive in their wages than seafarers from Kiribati, but where the recruitment costs are much, much lower. Considering that employment of a ship is max. 12 months the recruitment costs can be a rather high share of the labour costs. So the strategy of raising levels of qualification depends very much on the calculations of German private shipping companies and their willingness to keep the Marine Training Centre and the SPMS going. All this has fairly little to do with climate change adaptation or capacity building as a strategy to counter climate change impacts.
- Country Profile Kiribati: **Tropical cyclones:** the population centers of Kiribati (Gilbert Islands) do not have Tropical Cyclones, they are in the Equatorial Belt. **Community relocation experience:** Vaitupu would be better under Tuvalu, although at the time the relocation happened it was still together with what today is Kiribati. However, the country profiles are structured according to the present countries and not to the colonial situation.

I leave it with this. I hope that my comments are useful.

With all best wishes, and it was really a very interesting experience to read the report. Well done.

Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear Eberhard,

I see that you are at USP. It would be great to have a chat in person sometime soon. Send me an email at campbell7@un.org.

Thank you for the comments. We are currently working on a policy paper on the 'receiving communities' for Pacific island migrants. This policy paper focuses on Australian and New Zealand addresses many of the issues that you have raised in bullet point 2. I will share the paper with you when it is final.

Best regards.

Jon Sward, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom

Dear Jillian and members,

Firstly, congratulations on a very accomplished draft report on climate migration in the Pacific region. I think that in general the report captures the particular geographical challenges associated with various forms of climate migration likely to occur in the region.

The Migrating out of Poverty Research Consortium (see <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/>) was contacted to see if any of our researchers were interested in providing feedback on this version of the report. I am responding to this request, although please note that I am providing these comments in a personal capacity, rather than on behalf of the consortium.

One final caveat: my expertise on climate migration is mainly focused on West Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, so I will restrict myself mostly to general observations here.

Firstly, a few comments on the question of whether voluntary/economic migration and the accompanying remittances this provides can be classed as an 'adaptation activity', which is suggested on pages 14, 28, 46, and elsewhere in the report: while the report notes that robust evidence for this is currently lacking in the Pacific, it's suggested in studies from other regions that migration households are less vulnerable to climatic or other types of 'shocks' than families without a migrant member. However, it is important to note that access to this type of 'adaptation' is typically highly unequal: for example, those in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) with higher levels of education or wealth, or who have relatives already living in the United States, Australia or New Zealand are likely to have a better chance of accessing international migration pathways outside the PICs than those with limited education and little/no social network outside their immediate community. This is an important point that seems to be currently omitted from the report: migrants, or would-be migrants, have agency, but it's likely to be constrained by their personal attributes, and access to different types of information (in addition to other factors covered extensively in the report, including the importance of community membership and customary land tenure, etc.). So, 'economic migration' trajectories are likely to diverge depending on the realistic possibilities of the individual, based on their education, age, gender, level of wealth, etc. Indeed, the 2011 Foresight report on Migration and Global Environmental Change suggested that in the coming decades we may see the emergence of 'trapped populations' - people living in environmentally deteriorating conditions, but without the necessary 'capital' (financial or otherwise) to migrate. Given the widely dispersed populations in the PICs, this possibility seems relevant to consider for the region.

Secondly, in general the report takes a fairly negative view on urbanisation, and not entirely without reason: this is a process that presents significant challenges for governments that may have limited capacity to resolve infrastructure issues associated with growing urban populations, and these challenges are magnified in some PICs where urban atolls are particularly susceptible to sea-level rise. However, it's worth noting that growing population concentrations in urban areas can also offer opportunities for development interventions – for example, they make the provision of basic services such as healthcare and education more economical than in widely dispersed rural populations that typify the historical population settlement pattern in many PICs. The issue of informal urban settlements – also picked up on in the report – is a difficult one, especially as these settlements are quite often sited in environmentally vulnerable areas, meaning that people may be migrating *into* areas that are at a high risk of being negatively affected by climate change via flooding from heavy rainfall events or sea-level rise. However, in Latin America, which of course has a longer history of urbanisation than other developing regions, 'preventive resettlement' projects which formalise such informal settlements have had some success, and with donor funding such projects could also be pursued in properly identified informal settlements in PICs. Finally, it's worth noting that migration is only one component of urban population growth, as high endogenous growth of urban populations is also typical, so

rural-urban migration should not become the scapegoat for urban infrastructure issues that it is not the sole cause of.

Thirdly, while rural development programmes are certainly needed, these shouldn't be viewed as a means of restricting rural out-migration (as suggested on p. 15). The notion that rural development will lead to more people staying in rural areas is a common policy assumption, but there's no evidence that it typically 'works'. More development typically means that people have more options, and given the long history of migration in PICs, it has to assume that migration will always be considered as one of these. In fact, improvement in conditions at home usually has the opposite effect – allowing more people to initially leave, even if this migration is only temporary (see Hein de Haas's recent work for information more on this). And, from a development perspective, this should be considered a positive thing!

Finally, the report is essentially dealing with three (main) types of migration: international migration, rural-urban migration, and planned community resettlement. It might be worthwhile to creating expanded sets of policy recommendations that are specifically tailored to each of these three areas; as the report already highlights, each of these flows is quite different, and each implies different interactions between policy actors (governments, donors, civil society, International Nongovernment Organisations, community leaders, etc.).

Warm regards from the UK.

W: <http://sussex.academia.edu/JonSward>; Twitter: @JonSward

Jillian Campbell, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dear Jon,

I apologise for the delay in responding. I appreciate the very thought provoking comments. I will work to reflect these issues in the next version of the report.

The basis for the argument that voluntary migration is an adaptation strategy is related to the potential for voluntary migration to (1) reduce population pressure and thus increasing environmental sustainability in climate change affected areas; (2) labour migration can be a means of income diversification and may increase income generation through remittances and tourism receipts; (3) circular migration can increase the skills and experience of individuals in the community; and (4) creating migration opportunities can offset the risk associated with displacement (people who migrate voluntarily eliminate their risk of being displaced and can help establish a foundation for future migrants). However, if remittance sending is low then it could create additional vulnerabilities in communities where skilled persons have migrated.

We are also interested in looking at trapped populations. In the case of the Pacific, land rights greatly decrease the potential for internal migration and thus many people may be "trapped" on outer islands. I think this issue of land rights and trapped populations is critical for countries to consider in their approach to climate change and migration.

I also agree that hospitals and schools are both a benefit of urbanization and a reason for urbanization. Many of the outer islands of Pacific countries do not have a secondary school or a doctor. I think this can be better captured in the report.

As a part of this project we will be looking to work with the Governments of Nauru, Tuvalu and Kiribati to develop a set of policy recommendations which can hopefully serve to provide information to other countries in the Pacific as well. For more information on the current activities of the project, check out the newsletter: www.unescap.org/EPOC/pdf/Newsletter-PCCM.pdf.

Best regards.

Prof. Andrew Geddes, Department of Politics, University of Sheffield

Dear Jillian and colleagues,

These comments are made in a personal capacity and relate to the first two questions raised by the query. For the third question, I think that there will be people better placed than me to respond to issues related to National Sustainable Development strategies in the region.

The report makes a very powerful, rigorous and evidence-based contribution to understanding complex between environmental/climatic change and human migration in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The report shows that links between environmental change and human migration are complex, but there is an emerging body of research that provides important insight into these connections and from which policy-makers can draw when considering their options. Further targeted research would help to explore emerging issues and to address significant knowledge gaps.

A particularly important point made by the report is that there is a need for action now. This is not only a challenge for the future. Failure to respond effectively now, may lead to more difficult-to-manage challenges such as forced displacement in the future.

In response to questions 1 and 2 raised by the query:

1. The nature of the relationship between climate/environmental change and human migration is very important. The reference made in the report to data on projected numbers of 'environmental migrants' (running potentially to hundreds of millions) does raise questions about whether we should be thinking of environmental and climate change as 'trigger' mechanisms for migration. This is because we know from migration research that migration (both within states and internationally) is multi-causal. People move for many reasons, which does include environmental factors. However, there is considerable evidence that economic factors will probably remain a key driver of migration decisions (strongly influenced by decisions at household level that are shaped by relative income and wealth differentials). We also know that social factors such as the presence or absence of networks that link people to migration are very important. Also likely to be highly relevant are political factors such as the impact of conflict on the chances for people to migrate. Finally, demographic factors are also likely to play a key role as migration research does show us that younger people are more likely to move than older people and children. We also know that there are significant and important effects related to the gender of those who migrate.

The result is that environmental change can drive migration, but its effects are more likely to be apparent through interaction with economic, social, political and demographic factors. This means that it can be difficult to disentangle the environmental driver – particularly in the context of slower onset changes from other factors that can lead to migration (both internally and internationally). Research published in 2011 by the UK Government Office for Science (*Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities*) suggests that we need to think about the impacts of environmental and climate change in relation to our existing

understanding of migration. The result is that rather than there being one challenge (the environmental trigger) there are actually three policy challenges that need to be considered:

1. people who move as a result of rapid or slow onset changes
2. people whose livelihoods are affected by environmental change, but whose migration is towards and not away from risk. This is particularly the case in rural to urban migration which sees large numbers of internal and international migrants moving to fast-growing cities, particularly in parts of Asia and Africa. Many of these cities are in low elevation coastal zones. Movement towards risk is a key issue that can be neglected if we only consider the effects of environmental change as a trigger mechanism because this does not tell us much about the distance or the duration of migration.
3. people who do not want to move or prefer not to move with the risk that some people may be trapped in areas in which they are exposed to significant environmental risk. All of the factors identified above that could cause people to migrate could also mean that they find it more difficult to migrate. For example, if livelihoods are threatened by environmental change then people may not have the resources to move. Similarly, if there is conflict then this can reduce people's ability move.

To summarise: environmental and climate change play a role in both internal and international migration, but their effects are more likely to occur through interactions with other potential drivers of migration (economic, social, political, demographic). Effective responses will require co-ordination to recognise the multi-agency nature of the issues. This co-ordination should be both within national governments and between governments at regional level. Two issues that are less prominent in policy debate are: (i) movement influenced by environmental change that is towards risk (particularly to urban areas) and (ii) the possibility of people who are unwilling to move (because of an attachment to a place or are unable to move with the risk of being trapped in areas where there is a significant exposure to risk). The relevant question may not be to ask who the environmental migrants are, but to ask about the impacts of internal and international migration that has been influenced by environmental change.

2. There is a growing body of evidence to which this report makes an impressive contribution that economic migration does and will continue to allow people to sustain their livelihoods. Migration can thus be seen as a form of adaptation and not as a failure to adapt. This does raise policy challenges. Internal migration may occur towards urban areas in which migrants may then find themselves living in areas where they are exposed to risk while also facing greater difficulty accessing services, such as housing, education and health care. If there is movement towards risk then this can heighten the vulnerability of migrants. International migration is on a smaller scale than internal migration and there are significant policy challenges associated with the issues because of sovereignty issues, particularly in major destination states. However, measures at regional level to facilitate migration can promote the income diversification that allows people to sustain their livelihoods and help to offset more significant challenges in the future if migration routes are closed off. There is a need to know more about the effectiveness of existing schemes with regards to the transfer and use of remittances. It would also be important to know more about internal migration and the use of internal remittances.

Thank you.

Prof. Andrew Geddes is also a member of the Lead Expert Group appointed by the UK Government's Chief Scientific Advisor to oversee production of the report Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Climate Change and Development Community in the Pacific at ccd-pc@solutionexchange-un.net with the subject heading "Re: [ccd-pc-se] QUERY: Promoting Economic Migration as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Additional Reply."

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