

**THE MIGRATION-CLIMATE CHANGE NEXUS**

*Remarks by*

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Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

If any question about the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on humanity --- in 2010 alone, 350 natural disasters affected more than 300 million people -- the vast majority in poor, vulnerable communities -- around the globe.

Both natural, slow onset, human-induced humanitarian disasters seem likely to continue with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. And we know that environmental and land degradation and climate change will continue to have repercussions on life, livelihood, and development as we know it, and therefore will have profound implications for human mobility.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of climate change and environmental deterioration will be in terms of population displacement. Yet despite these considerations, displacement as a result of climate change received for the first time the attention it merits, only in the 2010 Cancun Agreements.

There is every appearance that climate change and environmental degradation -- whether slow onset ones such as de-forestation, soil and river erosion, or extreme environmental events such as tsunamis, earthquakes and other cataclysmic events -- are growing in frequency and intensity and are expected to displace multi-millions of people over the next forty years.

We are slow off the blocks as an international community to address this major phenomenon. Migration should not only be a last resort, but rather part of a comprehensive, coordinated adaptation strategy.

This brings me logically to my first point: that we must now work hard to catch-up in the race against time.

In this regard, we find encouragement in the 2010 Cancun Agreement that incorporated migration in the context of climate change vulnerability.

We also welcome the Dhaka Declaration adopted at the Climate Vulnerability Forum this year, which incorporated migration as an adaptation strategy to address climate-induced population displacement.

My second point: In order to respond to the many challenges posed by climate change, states require the capacities to help and protect their affected populations.

In essence, capacity implies having the right institutional, legal, administrative, financial, research and operational frameworks to manage migration driven by climatic factors.

Capacities are needed to plan for relocations when necessary and for sustainable city development.

We must not forget that migration also impacts on climate change -- in the form of the mass movement of people to cities that are already environmentally unsustainable. Already, for the first time in history, more than 50 percent of the world's population (3.5 billion people) live in urban areas.

Having sufficient capacity to communicate is also crucial in order to raise awareness and inform potentially affected populations.

My third point concerns the linkage between migration and adaptation to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Well planned migration can reduce the risks of forced displacement. Concretely this means that adaptation plans, as well as development strategies, should take into consideration migration.

Migration is a manifestation of an individual's desire for prosperity and should be an informed and safe option, leaving no population trapped without sustainable options.

In conclusion, let me assure you of IOM's engagement and support to the UNFCCC and partners, to act, enhance abilities and support adaptation efforts, so that migration is not just a consequence of climate change, but an integral part of the solution.

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