



ASWAN FORUM
FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
ملتقى أسوان للسلام و التنمية المستدامين

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

**THE CLIMATE-DISPLACEMENT NEXUS IN AFRICA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

JUNE 2022



Chair's Summary

The Climate-Displacement Nexus in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Peace and Development

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Aswan Forum

Egypt, in its capacity as the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa launched the Aswan Forum during its Presidency of the African Union in 2019 as a high-level platform that advances home-grown solutions to address the challenges facing the African continent by strengthening interlinkages between peace, security and sustainable development through long term innovative solutions and robust partnerships.



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KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

- **The impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on the African continent** – It is estimated that by 2050, climate change could force 216 million people out of their homes, 85.7 million of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.¹ Compounding this, climate displacement coincides with other structural problems, such as population growth, rapid urbanization, poverty as well as pre-existing socio-economic and governance challenges.
- **Despite this, national and local communities lack the adequate capacities to prevent, prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on human mobility** – Actions on the prevention, preparedness, and response fronts are needed to allow communities to be more resilient to the risk of forced displacement and to consolidate peace and development efforts.
- The **main challenges** associated with the intersection between climate change, conflict, and displacement include:
 - increasing competition over natural resources due to climate change, which jeopardizes social cohesion and triggers displacement trends
 - the disproportionate impact of climate change on certain persons in vulnerable situations, exposing them to further displacement risk
 - climate displacement as a threat multiplier that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and increases exposure to various forms of threats
 - limited policy coherence persists in addressing the nexus between climate change, conflict, and displacement
 - limited research and data collection capacities on climate displacement persist across the African continent
 - national, regional, and international legal and policy frameworks do not adequately address climate displacement
- The key **opportunities and recommendations** for African and international actors to address the prevention and adaptation to climate displacement in Africa, particularly for fragile and conflict-affected settings, include:
 - increasing investments in adaptation, prevention, disaster preparedness, early warning and early action
 - ensuring community-based participation in the formulation of responses
 - supporting an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach on the prevention and management fronts of climate displacement
 - supporting evidence-based approaches across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus
 - addressing and strengthening gender-sensitive humanitarian protection and assistance for displaced communities
 - addressing and accelerating financing, including the mobilization of climate finance mechanisms

¹ Clement, Viviane; Rigaud, Kanta Kumari; de Sherbinin, Alex; Jones, Bryan; Adamo, Susana; Schewe, Jacob; Sadiq, Nian; Shabhat, Elham. (2021). Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration. World Bank - <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248>



INTRODUCTION

While Africa has contributed the least to the climate crisis, it is the most exposed to its devastating consequences. Out of the 25 countries deemed most vulnerable to climate change on the ND-Gain's Index,² 14 are conflict-ridden.³ The compromised capacities of governments and communities to deal with climate threats and the inaction towards climate adaptation and mitigation, and the prevention of climate-related risks have cascaded into a multitude of threats and challenges, including that of forced displacement.

Today, the scale of the forced displacement crisis is unprecedented. In 2020 alone, climate-related disasters triggered more than three-quarters of the new displacements recorded during the same year, accounting for 30 million internally displaced persons worldwide.⁴ Moreover, since 2010, the

number of people forcibly displaced annually due to climate-related disasters as well as food and water insecurity has amounted to 21.5 million people.⁵ While forced displacement is a global phenomenon, Africa continues to experience a disproportionate impact. It is estimated that by 2050, climate change could force 216 million people out of their homes, 85.7 million of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ Indeed, climate-related challenges have forced many to relocate, undermined their resilience, and jeopardized peacebuilding gains. Compounding this, these emerging challenges coincide with mega-trends and other structural problems, such as population growth, rapid urbanization, poverty, as well as pre-existing socio-economic and governance challenges. All of this aggravates the risks associated with forced displacement.⁷

2 The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN; 2019) University of Notre Dame - <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>

3 Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict (2020), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict>

4 Global Report on Internal Displacement (2021) Internal Displacement Monitoring Center - <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

report/grid2021/

5 World Economic Forum (2021) Climate Refugees – the World's Forgotten Victims - <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/06/climate-refugees-the-world-s-forgotten-victims/>

6 Clement, Viviane; Rigaud, Kanta Kumari; de Sherbinin, Alex; Jones, Bryan; Adamo, Susana; Schewe, Jacob; Sadiq, Nian; Shabahat, Elham. (2021). Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration. World Bank - <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248>

7 The Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement (2014) Climate Change and Internal Displacement - <https://www.brookings.edu/research/climate-change-and-internal-displacement/>

Despite the growing recognition of the climate-displacement nexus, there are considerable gaps and limitations that persist in the current responses to climate-induced forced displacement. On one hand, there is an imperative to (1) accelerate efforts on the adaptation, prevention, early action, preparedness, and climate finance fronts. This is to allow communities to be more resilient to the risk of forced displacement and to consolidate peace and development efforts. On the other hand, it is important to put concerted efforts into (2) enhancing the management of climate-induced displacement to effectively meet the **livelihoods**, humanitarian and protection needs of affected communities, which if left unaddressed could breed further instability and undermine peacebuilding efforts. Protection needs — especially of women, children, and other populations in vulnerable contexts — when undetected or unmet, increase the risks of exploitation, trafficking, migrant smuggling, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), arbitrary detention, and radicalization.

Against this backdrop and in accordance with the conclusions of the first edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) organized a preparatory workshop for the third edition of the Aswan Forum on Sustainable Peace and Development titled: “The Climate-Displacement Nexus in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Peace and Development”. The workshop aimed to (1) identify policy challenges with regards to the prevention and management of climate-induced forced displacement in Africa; (2) take stock of the successful lessons and pitfalls in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions aimed at preventing and protecting climate-induced forcibly displaced persons; (3) infer concrete recommendations and actions for African policymakers and their partners on how to deal with climate-induced forced displacement as well as its implications for sustainable peace and development. This Chairman’s Summary synthesizes the key

messages and recommendations that were articulated in the workshop. It sheds light on the main risks and challenges that climate-induced displacement poses to sustainable peace and development in Africa, specifies the good practices and lessons learned in responding to climate-induced displacement in Africa, and highlights the key recommendations and action points for African policymakers and their partners to advance sustainable responses to climate-induced displacement.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

I. CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT, AND DISPLACEMENT: RISKS AND CHALLENGES FOR AFRICA

1. **Climate change increases competition over natural resources, jeopardizing social cohesion and triggering displacement trends** – Climate change disrupts existing population dynamics and can lead to natural resource-based livelihood depletion in communities receiving displaced populations. This triggers communal clashes over scarce natural resources (e.g., land and water). In return, fragility and conflict hinder national, local, and individual capacities to prevent, prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The intersection between conflict and extreme weather events places an additional burden on governments, communities, and response systems. This increases the risk of protracted situations of displacement while breeding further violence and instability, thus reinforcing a vicious cycle between climate risks, conflict, and displacement.

Key facts and examples:

- 95% of all internal displacement triggered by conflict took place in countries that were either vulnerable or even highly vulnerable to climate change.⁸

⁸ Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021, Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), p. 97 - https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/grid2021_idmc.pdf

- 89% of disaster displacements in 2020 were climate-related, such as floods, storms, droughts, and wildfires.⁹
- 29.54% of Nigeria's total landmass is affected by desertification, which had an impact on transhumance patterns and displacement trends, contributing to North-South tensions between herders and pastoralists in the middle belt and in Southern Nigeria.¹⁰

2. **Climate change disproportionately impacts certain persons in vulnerable situations, exposing them to further displacement risk** – Entire populations are already suffering the impacts of climate change, but persons living in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected countries are often disproportionately affected. In addition, diversity factors such as gender, age, disability, and income levels, shape the experience of climate-displaced populations. Amongst the affected communities, women and girls are often disproportionately affected by climate change and more at risk of displacement. Conversely, due to pre-existing cultural, social, and economic inequalities, women and girls are also exposed to the risk of being unable to resort to displacement in response to disasters, thus remaining trapped in a state of 'involuntary immobility'.
3. **Climate displacement is a threat multiplier that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and increases exposure to various forms of threats** – Displaced communities face food, water, livelihood, and shelter insecurity as well as limited access to health and social services—all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic—especially in conflict-affected areas. Climate displacement also exposes displaced communities, especially women and children, to other forms of threats such as human trafficking, migrant smuggling, banditry, kidnappings for ransom, SGBV, and radicalization.

Key facts and examples:

- Due to climate change, the increasing loss of livelihood in countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and the Lake Chad Basin has triggered a rise in criminal activities (e.g. banditry, terrorist activity, ransom kidnappings) and increased youth engagement in criminal networks as a means for survival (e.g. arms, drug, and human trafficking).¹¹
4. **Limited policy coherence persists in addressing the nexus between climate change, conflict, and displacement** – Global, regional, and national efforts are being deployed to increase synergies across this nexus. However, climate and environmental concerns are not yet fully integrated into migration policies and practice. Conversely, climate and environmental policies and practices insufficiently take displacement and other forms of human mobility into account. Therefore, promoting policy coherence entails enhancing efforts to mainstream displacement, climate change, and environmental considerations throughout other relevant agendas (e.g., the food security agenda).
 5. **Limited research and data collection capacities on climate displacement persists across the African continent** – The lack of data collection and generation on climate displacement limits the capacities of national and regional entities to measure the scale, patterns, and impacts of climate displacement. It also hinders efforts to catalyze the political will to address this challenge.
 6. **National and international legal and policy frameworks do not adequately address climate displacement** – The Global Compact for Migration recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change drive migration, and accordingly sets out a number of recommendations, such as (i) adopting appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures in countries of origin to

⁹ Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021, Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), p. 88 -https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/grid2021_idmc.pdf
¹⁰ T.E. Olagunju (2021) Climate Change Impacts on Environment: Human Displacement and Social Conflicts in Nigeria

¹¹ A. N. Anthonia, Yero A. B., Odele M. O., and Irene A. M. (2021) Reviewing the Links Between Climate Change and Resource Conflict, *Global Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences*, 27, 243-152.

minimize adverse drivers of forced migration and (ii) providing legal pathways for climate-induced migrants. However, such efforts require enhanced international cooperation. The Global Compact on Refugees also recognizes that climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters, while not root causes of refugee movements in and of themselves, interact with such root causes, multiplying threats and further exacerbating refugee crises. Similarly, displacement considerations are not adequately included in climate adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction legislation at the national level. To address this, more needs to be done to advance anticipatory and preventive action and achieve coherence between States' commitments under the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Global Compact for Migration.

II. ADVANCING DURABLE SOLUTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

1. **Increasing investments in adaptation, prevention, disaster preparedness, early warning, and early action** – Adaptation measures, early warning systems, risk assessment, and forecast models can help prepare for as well as prevent future displacement. They can also help communities become more resilient and less exposed to disaster risks. Doing this requires (1) investing in climate-smart solutions and (2) financing structures that better link humanitarian assistance, development initiatives, and peacebuilding in budget lines, to strengthen resilience and contribute to crisis prevention.

Key facts and examples:

- According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), the risk of displacement due to floods is expected to at least double by 2090, with low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa particularly

affected. Based on localized results of IDMC's models, governments can decide where infrastructure needs to be enforced, or in which areas settlements should no longer be allowed. Risk modeling can also help us plan the capacity of evacuation centers and the systems needed to support displaced persons.

2. **Ensuring community-based participation in the formulation of responses** – For successful, durable solutions, it is necessary for affected communities to actively participate in all stages of the design, analysis, and implementation of programs and services offered by humanitarian as well as national bodies, while taking into consideration the voices of women and youth. In addition, working with grassroots actors is vital (rather than implement high-level or top-down interventions) as they facilitate direct two-way communication with affected communities and can have easier access to displaced communities, reflecting their urgent needs.
3. **Supporting an integrated multi-stakeholder approach on the prevention and management fronts** – Coordination and planning between peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction, and climate actors is necessary to strengthen operational coalitions while exploring avenues of cooperation with non-traditional actors (e.g., the private sector) and understanding the role they can play in achieving durable solutions for displaced communities. There is also a need to move towards the integration of climate action into other policy sectors and bridging the organizational silos between humanitarian, development, and peace actors. All in all, African coordination frameworks are needed to address not only the immediate causes and consequences of climate displacement but the underlying root causes of climate displacement with the ultimate objective of preventing climate disasters.

4. **Supporting evidence-based approaches across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus** – There is a need to accelerate the collection and dissemination of relevant data in order to enhance coordination between the relevant actors and to establish a common evidence-based reference point. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to invest in (1) better and shared data and analysis; (2) predictive modeling; and (3) capacity building initiatives for national statistical agencies and research institutes.

Key facts and examples:

- The Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI) is a timely global partnership launched by the African Union Commission, the United Nations, and the World Bank that aims to advance data-based solutions to climate-forced mobility in Africa, thus supporting evidence-based responses to climate displacement across the continent.
5. **Addressing and strengthening gender-sensitive humanitarian protection and assistance for the displaced communities** – It is important to ensure livelihood support to displaced communities and address their fundamental needs such as shelter, food, clean water, and access to health services. This also requires integrating displacement, from the onset, in the analysis of how to help relieve those affected by both conflict and climate. It is also of crucial importance to invest in local capacity building and education. This requires implementing projects that promote self-reliance within displaced communities, using a gendered approach, and mainstreaming gender throughout all levels of interventions so no one gets left behind.

Key facts and examples:

- Solar Sister Nigeria's work with women mounting solar panels: This initiative aims to empower women and children and prepare them for climate hardships through 'climate change awareness' (e.g., teaching them how to deal with drought and establish diverse streams of income). It also highlights the need to scale-up investments in women and women-led enterprises.
6. **Addressing and accelerating financing, including the mobilization of climate finance mechanisms** – There is a need to secure funding through stable resources (e.g., domestic resource mobilization) and funding initiatives in order to prevent climate displacement, assist people on the move, and facilitate safe and regular migration when adaptation options no longer exist in the places of origin. This will require supporting government capacities that are most at risk and at the forefront of receiving the impact of displacement with financial and human resources to build the resilience of their institutions and support them in accessing the necessary climate funds.



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