

Economic & Social Council- Research Report II

Managing the impact of climate related migration and its economic consequences.

Introduction and Background:

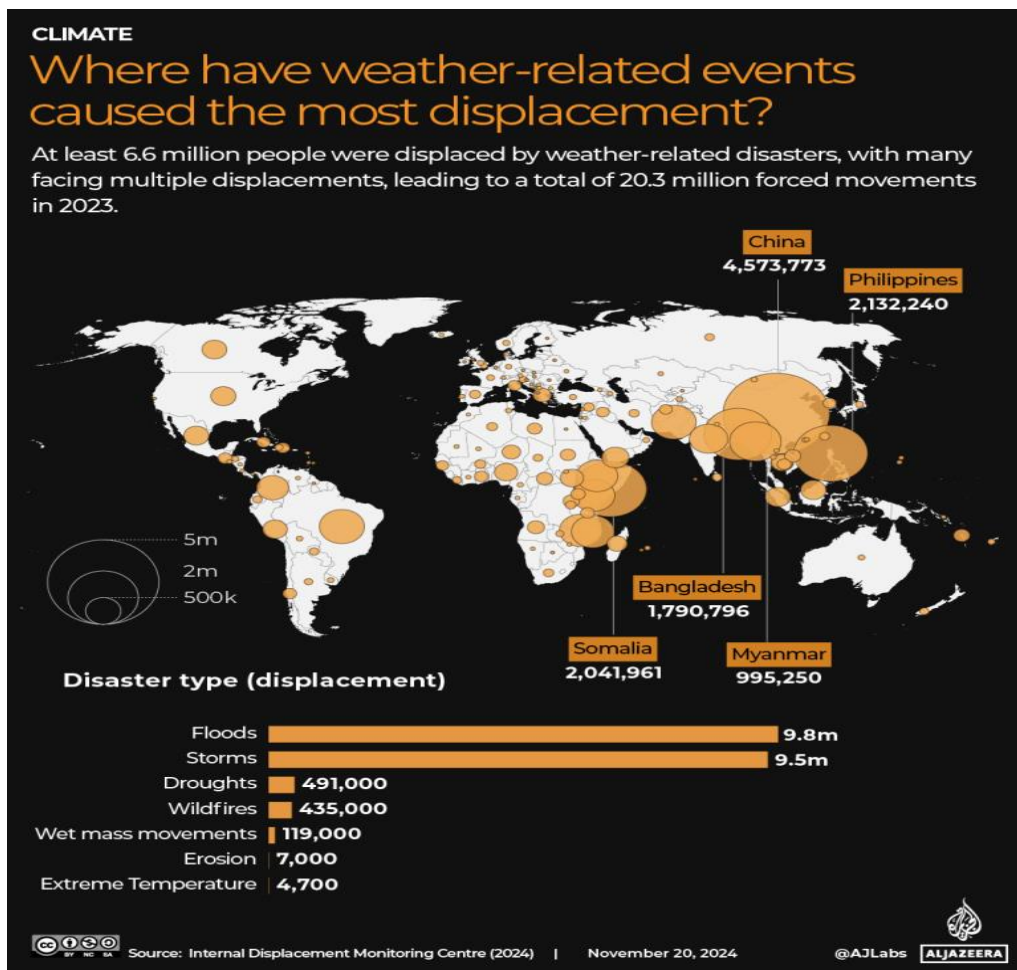
Climate related migration is a sub-category of environmental migration and, although there isn't a legal definition for it, the **IOM** has helped define the complexity of the concept.

Essentially, Climate related migration can be described as the movement of a person or a group of people that are forcedly displaced from their usual residence, or choose to move, either permanently or temporarily, internally or abroad, because of spontaneous or gradual changes in the environment they live in which have happened as a result of climate change.

The effects of Climate change can be either direct or indirect.

Exemplarily, over a million people were displaced in 2022, predominantly in Somalia, due to a drought(direct effects of climate change), while in other parts, like Honduras or Guatemala, people migrated to the United States due to rising temperatures threatening employments and lives(indirect).

Most climate prompted migration happens internally and is temporary. In 2022, there were 33 million displacements caused by natural disasters, still, the biggest displacements happened from droughts in East Africa and floods in Pakistan. These saw people initially move within their countries before returning to their hometowns. However, besides these impacts, the long-term impacts of climate migration must be considered. Particularly, the slow and steady impacts of climate change may force permanent and international displacement.



Mapping the impact of climate change- (Aljazeera)

Because of its rising prominence, climate migration has gained traction on the international stage. Already, despite the term's lack of officiality, the term has been used by several, such as the World Bank, where it has been applied to designate predictions on future movement as consequence of the detrimental challenges and effects posed by climate change.

It is also included in the 'Cancun Agreements on Climate Change adaptation' which were implemented by member states in the UNFCCC at the 2010 conference. Terminology such as a climate refugee or environmental refugee is popular in the media and is enhanced by activists to raise awareness and call attention to environmental/climate migration and emphasize the needs of people who are impacted by climate change, catastrophes or environmental deterioration.

However, these terms cannot be categorized under any legislative global frame, even though these people may sometimes experience situations alike to those of refugees, including the necessity for aid and security as well as the passage of borders.

Over the past few years, climate change has worsened, with damaging effects on ecosystems and billions of individuals, through sky-rocketing temperatures and more frequent flooding.

Climate change may impact the quality of life through limiting human rights such as the right to nourishment and health. As a result, people may voluntarily move in search of better life conditions.

Rises in temperatures and increased rainfall, droughts and hurricanes may reduce productivity of a nation, through health issues, such as heat stress, which may reduce work hours significantly. This will elevate financial hardship and reduce the liveliness of a region.

These extreme weather events, temperature changes and ecological degradation have already impacted millions of deprived individuals, most of which do not have any sorts of financial safety nets (like government assistance or alternate income sustenance), and who have unwillingly migrated, leaving their homes in search of safer, sustainable living destinations that may offer a chance at more prosperous livelihoods.

A way of diminishing the adversities that lead to climate related migration, is to furnish people with the chance of upskilling and a superior education which may allow people to build resilience against these challenges and develop strategies to diminish climate change and its consequences. This may also provide opportunities for individuals to secure more stable employment that will not be so susceptible to harm done by climate change.

Climate related Migration may impact an individual or group of people in both positive and negative manners. On a positive note, it may allow trapped families to ascend on a social level and overcome financial hardship by sending their older children to urbanized regions where they can acquire a finer education and the dexterity needed to successfully secure better employments and work conditions (that will not suffer the adversities of climate change) with higher wages.

These new employments may also act as financial protection for the families that may be left behind by acting as a 'remittance' which may help them survive the economic impact of other climate related disasters (droughts, floods...etc.).

Primarily, for the receiving populations, there will be some disadvantages, such as having to deal with increased competition for their work positions as well as the possibility that these new citizens may use up their government generated safety net programs. This would negatively impact the receiving communities as they may be more susceptible to losing their jobs (or being incapable of placing a job) along with having delayed and less individualized financial assistance, leading to an overall increase in their financial struggle.

However, climate migrants may also contribute to favor the receiving nation's economy, by responding to labor market demands through elevated consumption numbers of local products and services. They might also lead to increasing wages or jobs for receiving populations as these individuals are more likely to become entrepreneurs and open new businesses.

The IPCC has estimated that by 2050, about 200 million people will have been displaced as a result of coastal flooding, shoreline erosion, and agricultural disturbances, impacting not only those who have migrated but also the communities receiving them.

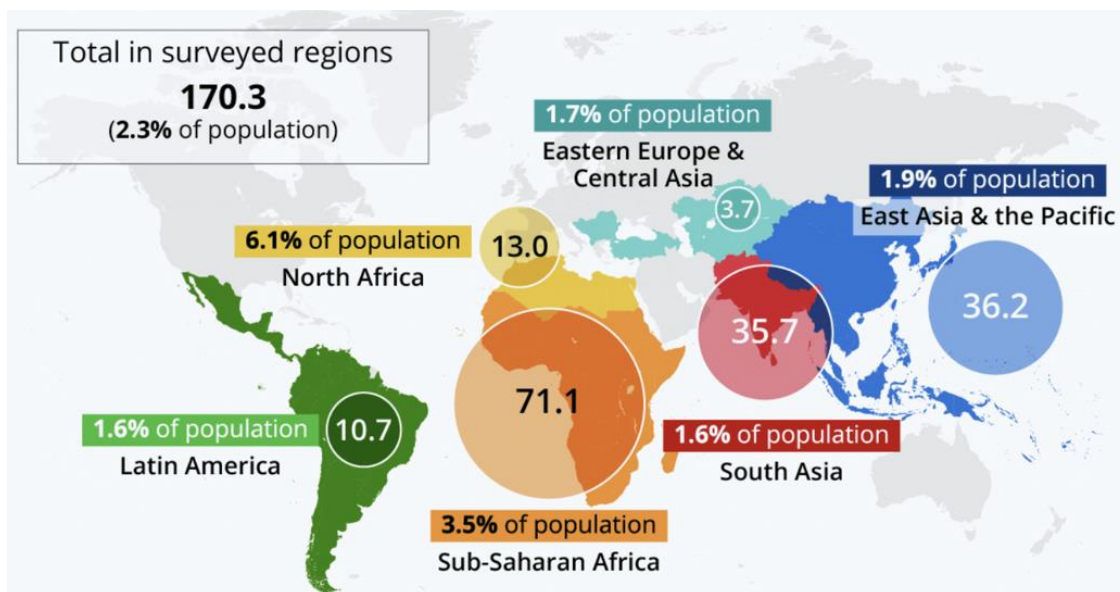


Figure 1.1- Climate Change, the Greater Displacer: Average numbers of international climate migrants by 2050 per regions (in millions) - **Statista**

Focus of Debate

Delegates should focus on identifying strategies to manage the economic consequences of climate-induced migration while ensuring the protection of vulnerable populations. Prioritizing international collaboration to establish sustainable funding mechanisms, integrate climate resilience into urban planning, and address legal gaps in the protection of climate migrants. Additionally, there should be discussions on enhancing local adaptive capacity and improving global frameworks for equitable migration management.

Key Parties

1. National Governments:
 - Policy Development and Implementation: Governments are in charge of generating and enforcing policies to recognize and combat climate change impacts, control migration flows, and diminish economic repercussions.
2. International Organizations:
 - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
 - International Organization for Migration (IOM).
3. Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs):
 - Financial Support: MDBs have invested in sustainable infrastructure and providing economic aid to uplift populations affected by climate-propelled migration.
4. Local Communities and Authorities.
5. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

- Advocacy and Support Services: provide services to migrants and call for policies that designate the root causes of climate-induced migration, while boosting local's ability to accommodate to climate change impacts.
6. Private Sector:
 - Economic Adaptation: Companies may need to adapt through elevated salaries, amplifying benefits, and by taking into account remote work policies that can adjust to shifting demographics.
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13. Countries affected by climate change/ climate induced migration

-Many but not all ' climate refugees' will come from sub-saharan Africa, south Asia or Latin America(a 2018 report predicted that 143 million would be displaced in this region)

- Bangladesh: 75% of the country is below sea level
 - As a result, 25. 9 million have been displaced already and it is predicted that by 2050 20 billion people will be further displaced as more 17% of the country will be under sea level
 - Countries with the greatest number of internal displacement due to **natural disasters** or climate change(2023):

1. **Afghanistan**: 1.5 million people
2. **Pakistan**: 1.21 million people
3. **Ethiopia**: 881,000 people
4. **Türkiye**: 822,000 people
5. **China**: 639,000 people
6. **South Sudan**: 563,000 people
7. **Philippines**: 291,000 people
8. **Myanmar**: 235,000 people
9. **Democratic Republic of the Congo**: 147,000 people
10. **Morocco**: 146,000 people

- The United States has also suffered from climate induced migration with 82,000 people displaced in 2023 as a result from natural disasters. In total, there has been 400 weather or climate related disasters as of 1980, and the destruction faced corresponds to a total of \$2.785

Recent Developments:

In the coming decades, it is expected that climate change will worsen, elevating the numbers of climate related migration to numbers never witnessed before in history.

Extreme weather events such as but not limited to **fluctuating** rainfall patterns, reduced agricultural productivity and increased **desertification** are estimated to compromise the lives of people in **rural** areas and the provision of rewarding employments in those regions, forcing these individuals to be displaced into **urban** cities.

This sudden displacement may be positive for these individuals, helping them to lead healthy lives away from the danger of **natural disasters**, or in the case where mobility is chosen before the crisis becomes serious, it may facilitate a smoother integration into their new lives as well as avoid the chaos and difficulty of sudden disasters.

However, climate-induced migration may also completely change the lives of people that may not know how to cope well with the overwhelming environment of an urban city and the risks involved in their new daily lives.

In October 2020, the **UNHCR** published a set of legal considerations to provide international protection to individuals that may be impacted by the consequences of climate change or any environmental disaster. This was significant, recognizing that some individuals should be allowed to undertake the status of a refugee when they have been displaced by a climate crisis which jeopardizes their safety or that of a public order due to a series of interconnecting factors.

The UN has begun addressing climate related disasters by:

- Generating pre-disaster responses focused on local environments and specific circumstances

- Cooperating with certain populations to create resilience plans to acknowledge and react to crisis, diminishing the damage of future disasters
- Raising awareness on climate related issues and promoting wide-ranging solutions that will aid marginalized groups most affected by the disasters on a national and global level

Important Statistics:

- 30 million people are displaced every year to environmental catastrophes
- In 2022, 53% of displacement within a country was a result of a disaster, 98% of which were natural disasters
- The main climate related disasters that propel migration are; hurricanes, cyclones, tsunamis, and droughts
- Climate change has also **deteriorated** quality of life, including basic sanitation, forcing people to move due to water shortages and starvation

Past UN Actions

- Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018): Includes a section dedicated to addressing climate-induced migration, recognizing the need for international cooperation to mitigate risks and provide solutions for affected populations.
- Paris Agreement (2015): While primarily focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of minimizing displacement caused by the adverse effects of climate change.
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015): The Sendai Framework highlights the importance of addressing displacement caused by disasters and enhancing the resilience of communities vulnerable to climate impacts.
- UNHCR's Initiative on Climate Action (2019): The UNHCR launched a strategic framework to integrate climate action into its operations, including preparedness and response measures for climate-induced displacement.
- Nansen Initiative (2012): This state-led initiative focused on addressing the protection needs of people displaced across borders by disasters and climate change.

Possible Solutions:

- Measures to mitigate climate change:
 - Such as government legislative policies
 - Educational programs to teach citizens and raise awareness on ecological issues
 - Environmental Programs that organize activities to promote a healthier planet (e.g. beach cleanups, educational campaigns, protests)
- Providing aid and protection to people forced to flee due to natural disasters /extreme climate change
- Measures to ensure that individuals are well integrated in their new residences

- Policies to ensure that displaced people will continue to have access to health insurance
- Creation of more employment opportunities
- Creation of more stable jobs that will be more persistent to the negative impacts of climate change

Glossary and Key Terms:

- **Climate migration:** refers to “the movement of a person or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change, are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border” (IOM, 2019)
- **IOM:** History of the International Organization for Migration
- **UNFCCC:** UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- **UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- **IPPC:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- **Fluctuating:** “rising and falling irregularly in number or amount”(Oxford languages)
- **Natural Disaster:** “A natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or hurricane that causes great damage or loss of life.” (Oxford Languages)
- **Desertification:** “The process by which fertile land becomes desert, typically as a result of drought, deforestation, or inappropriate agriculture.” (Oxford Languages)
- **Rural:** “In, relating to, or characteristic of the countryside rather than the town.”
- **Urban:** “In, relating to, or characteristic of a town or city.”
- **Deterioration:** “The process of becoming progressively worse.”
- **Cyclones:** “A violent and often destructive storm in which the wind moves very fast in a circular direction” (Cambridge Dictionary)

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Graphs:

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- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/22/mapping-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-global-displacement>

