



STATEMENT

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Secretary-General for International Migration**

**GFMD Thematic Workshop
“Climate Change and Human Mobility”**

Opening Plenary Session

**24 May 2017, Mohammed VI International Conference Center
Rabat/Skhirat**

Dear GFMD Co-Chairs,
Dear Excellencies, Dear colleagues,

Let me thank the German-Moroccan co-chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development for inviting me to speak at this GFMD Thematic Workshop on “Climate Change and Human Mobility”.

This is a relatively new topic for the international community. The Agenda 21, adopted in 1992, mentioned for the first time in a UN agreement that “*Research should be conducted on how environmental factors interact with socio-economic factors as a cause of migration*”.

Twenty-five years later, we can count on a solid knowledge base as to the relationship between climate change, environmental change and migration. Let me highlight three key points.

First, particularly in rural areas of the global South, environmental drivers of migration have a strong influence on people’s decisions to migrate (or not). Further, in the context of climate change, the influence of these drivers is increasing over time. How precisely environmental changes drive migration depends heavily on their interaction with other social, political, economic and demographic factors but the fundamental linkage is clear.

Second, most people who are displaced in the context of disasters and environmental change move within their countries rather than across borders.

And third, in the upcoming decades, millions of people are likely to find themselves trapped in highly vulnerable locations, because they lack the resources to migrate. This implies, of course, that climate change will not only impact migrants, but also people who are forced to remain where they are.

In spite of the substantial progress in our understanding of the relationship between climate change and migration, it is also important to think about remaining knowledge gaps.

In particular, even in the case of forced displacement, we often picture migrants as young men in search of jobs, and forget that 48% of international migrants are women and girls. Any action to address movements in the context of climate change must be responsive to the specific roles, voices, vulnerabilities and needs of migrant women and girls. We must follow, indeed strengthen, best practices for their protection and empowerment.

The very first paragraph of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants highlights that people move “in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural

disasters (some of which may be linked to climate change), or other environmental factors.”

Migration and displacement are also high on the climate change agenda. The Paris Climate Agreement established a Task Force to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change. The first meeting of this Task Force took place last week in Bonn.

As we work towards a global compact on migration, it is imperative that we identify measures by which we can collectively respond to migration and displacement in the context of climate change, in a way that protects and empowers all women and men on the move as well as the communities they leave behind . It is equally imperative that we implement measures already identified to that effect.

We already have three useful documents on the subject:

1. The draft Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, developed by the Global Migration Group;
2. The Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, produced by the Migrants in Countries in Crisis initiative; and

3. The Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change which resulted from the Nansen Initiative.

The facilitation of safe, orderly and regular migration in the context of slow-onset environmental degradation will secure better livelihoods for affected individuals and communities, while filling labour shortages at all skill levels in destination areas. Put in place in a timely fashion, such response would also contribute towards lifting pressure on overstretched ecosystems.

We already know, in large part, where these vulnerable environments are. There is no excuse for not planning ahead. Your meeting today is an important step in that direction.

Thank you for your kind attention.