

Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

Second Informal Thematic Session:

“Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crisis, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution”

New York, 22-23 May 2017

United Nations Headquarters, ECOSOC chamber

PANEL 3: Adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters as drivers of migration Intervention (3 min.)

Germany very much appreciates that this panel is addressing the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters as drivers of migration.

Millions of people are displaced every year in the aftermath of disasters. Others decide to move away from their home because they already experience the negative effects of climate change on their livelihood. Displacement and migration related to disasters are already a reality and the number of people migrating or being displaced is very likely to increase in the future both internally and cross international borders. In our view, climate induced disasters in general and climate-induced displacement and migration in particular are among the most pressing humanitarian challenges of the 21st century.

The set of drivers that force people to move are complex and inter-related. Natural hazards like earthquakes, as well as extreme weather events like floods, tropical storms and also slow-onset environmental changes such as soil salination, desertification or raising sea levels linked to climate change may overwhelm the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities at risk and lead to disaster displacement. Migration is also considered as an important adaptation and survival strategy e.g. in cases of slow-onset events.

As you know, Germany currently chairs the Platform on Disaster Displacement together with our vice-chair Bangladesh. This platform followed up on the Nansen Initiative and supports States in implementing the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda. It addresses the challenges of cross border displacement and migration due to disasters and climate change.

There are a number of measures States can take to reduce the risk of disaster related displacements and strengthen resilience, such as providing swift and adequate humanitarian assistance and protection, increase the efforts to reduce disaster risks, promote early warning, strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation action and implement sustainable development projects.

In our view, we need to scale up efforts to strengthen the management of disaster displacement risks in country of origin and strengthen efforts to address disaster displacement drivers such as natural hazards, environmental change and the effects of climate change. We need to work hand in hand with countries at risk, development actors and humanitarian partners. Only a shared perception of risks and coordinated efforts will have the necessary impact.

Under the Paris Agreement, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage established a Task Force on Displacement working on the nexus of the adverse effects of climate change and human mobility. The Task force will develop recommendations for the Parties of the UNFCCC and we see synergies (e.g. mainstreaming of migration/displacement-related aspects in adaptation planning and action) between the Task Force and the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

Taking this as an example, we need to strengthen the implementation of existing policies and frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda for Humanity. This requires coordination among different international organizations, policy areas and governmental institutions.

We need to promote policy coherence and mainstreaming of human mobility challenges across these relevant policy and action areas in order to better address cross-border disaster displacement and its root causes as well as to better support internal and international migration as an adaptation strategy.

Where migration is a valid and chosen strategy of adaptation, states need to prepare for cross-border migration measures, building on existing effective practices including humanitarian protection measures, such as temporary protection status, humanitarian visa and free movement of persons schemes. This is being supported by Germany.

We are in the process of setting up a global programme on climate-induced human mobility which will be implemented in several most affected regions, in particular the Pacific Islands Region.

We expect the Global Compact on Migration to clearly spell out the major challenges of disaster displacement and to address the protection needs of people displaced by natural disaster and the adverse effects of climate change. Additionally, migration due to the negative impacts of climate change needs to be addressed and, where necessary, acknowledged as an important adaptation strategy.

Furthermore we see the need to strengthen domestic legislation and policies on internal displacement and ensure that they include IDPs displaced in disaster contexts and that IDPs receive adequate protection and assistance. Migration into an even more vulnerable situation needs to be avoided.

Thank you.