

## **Intervention by Tuvalu for Panel 3: Adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters as drivers of migration**

Thank you co-facilitator.

Recent studies by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the Norwegian Refugee Council suggest that an average of 22.5 million people have been displaced each year by climate or weather-related disasters in the last seven years.

This is equivalent to 62,000 people every day<sup>1</sup>. This figure will increase as the impacts of climate change become more evident.

It is clear that the plight of internally displaced people and forced migrants need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

As has been stated at many meetings these people are not climate change refugees as they do not fit the definition of refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Consequently forced migrants or externally displaced people due to climate change and other natural disasters are not properly protected.

We see there are 5 key steps that can be taken to help people displaced by climate change or may be displaced at some time in the future.

**1. The first step is prevention.** We clearly need far greatly enhanced efforts to develop early warning systems and to significantly help people adapt to the impacts of climate change. This means funding for climate change adaptation needs to be dramatically enhanced. Current funding under the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund are inadequate.

We need to explore innovative sources of funding for adaptation and what is now called loss and damage. New sources of funding could include carbon levies, aviation levies, financial transaction taxes etc).

**2. The next step is dignified migration:** We need to find opportunities for people to migrate with dignity so as to avoid disasters before they occur. They need be able to find a meaningful and fulfilling existence outside their home country. We need to develop settlement strategies that allow people to gain meaningful employment in host countries. This links with labour mobility issues. Labour mobility can be seen as a climate change adaptation strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle Yonetani , 2015, *Global Estimates 2015, People Displaced by Disasters*, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council , Geneva, pp102

**3. The next step is rapid response measures:** When people are hit by climate change and other natural disasters we need to build effective rapid response measures to ensure that people have the opportunity to survive such disasters and rebuild their lives. Exploring climate change insurance arrangements is one possible approach to help support this rebuilding effort.

**4. The next step is protection:** We need to give legal protection to people internally and externally displaced due to climate change. As these people are not refugees we need to establish a legal regime to afford these people basic rights when they are forced to migrate. In this instance, Tuvalu has proposed a UN General Assembly resolution to commence work towards a legal agreement to give protection to people displaced by the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. Whether this would fit within the Compact on Migration or is a stand alone agreement will need to be explored further.

**5. Finally, we must create the opportunity for return.** We must create the opportunity for people to return to their homeland. We sincerely hope that forced migration or displacement due to climate change or natural disasters is not permanent. Although we acknowledge that some people may wish to stay in their new host country. Nevertheless, we need to create the right conditions for people to return and not fear the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

Not all these steps can be addressed solely by the Compact on Migration. Other institutions and processes may have to take up a key role. We need to identify the strategic role that the Compact can play in addressing the linkages between climate change and forced migration. We look forward to engaging in this discussion further.

Thank you