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Migrations in Our Common Home

Planning for Change
– Climate Change and Migration

Roundtable on Migrations in Our Common Home

Migrations in Our Common Home

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Introduction

COP27, held in Sharm el Sheikh this year, marks thirty years since the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As the world grapples with the devastating consequences of intensifying climate change, this policy brief examines how climate change is impacting migration, displacement and food security. As COP27 draws to a close, this policy brief looks at the pledges made by Ireland, as well as Ireland's obligations to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Climate Finance, and the compelling argument in favour of Loss and Damage funding made by the Global south for over three decades. This policy brief argues for climate justice and for the Global North to accept responsibility for its role in driving climate change and abide by its commitments to address worsening conditions for those in the Global South.

The group of organisations involved in the Roundtable on Migration are concerned that migration is not getting the attention it deserves. We urge the government to meet its international obligations but also ensure a human rights-based approach to migration.

Climate Change: Global Context for Migration in the 21st Century

Climate change is the most significant physical change in our global environment that is already having a negative impact on the Global South in particular, on human habitation and agricultural patterns, which in turn can destabilise societies thus providing a motivating factor for migration.

A Continuum of Displacement

While there is a wide range of drivers of migration and displacement, they are often highly interconnected. For example, climate change may impact the socio-economic conditions of a region or community, which may then increase the likelihood of armed conflict (Cubie, 2022) and thus displacement. Therefore, an appropriate lens through which to view this type of migration is the 'continuum of displacement' as proposed by Graeme Hugo (1996). While Hugo recognises the difficult nature of precisely identifying specific drivers of migration, the continuum of displacement allows for migration to be viewed on a spectrum, from Voluntary Migration, whereby the dominant factor is the free choice of the migrant to move from one place to another, on one end of the spectrum, to Forced Migration at the other, that is, individuals forced to move to avoid the risk of serious harm or death, and Involuntary Migration, a range of factors which impact the agency of people over whether or not they migrate, as a midway point (Hugo, 1996).

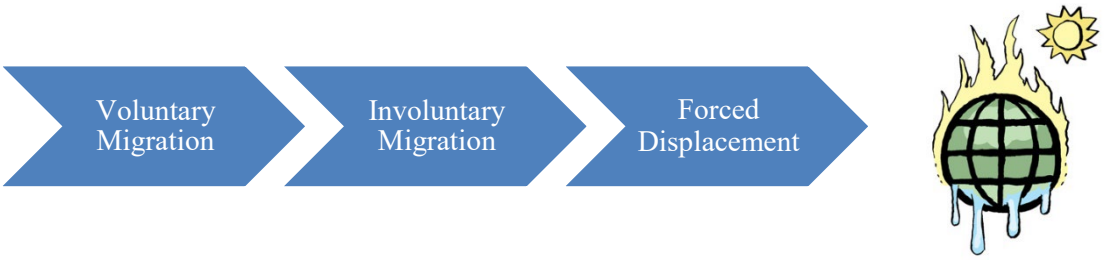

Figure 1: Continuum of Displacement

Climate Shocks and Displacement

The international evidence regarding climate change and the impact of human activity is irrefutable. The frequency and severity of extreme weather events have been made up to nine times more likely by human-caused global warming. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2019) paints an ominous picture with scientists observing changes in the Earth's climate in every region and across the whole climate system. Some of the changes already set in motion – such as continued sea level rise – are irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years. Food production and ecosystems are particularly vulnerable. The latest research from the World Meteorological Organisation (2021) shows that 2011-2020 was the warmest period on record, in a persistent long-term climate change trend. The past decade has been characterised by sea level rise, glacier ice loss and extreme weather.

According to the UNHCR "Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and disaster displacement one of its most devastating consequences."[1] The effects of climate change have increased the vulnerability of many communities, leading to enforced migration, internal displacement, poverty, hunger and even death. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that the effects of climate change will lead to increased conflict and regional instability in many of the poorest parts of the world: "Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts in the form of civil war and inter-group violence by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks (medium confidence). Multiple lines of evidence relate climate variability to these forms of conflict" (IPCC, 2014, p. 20). These are all factors causing displacement of an estimated 21.6 million people, on average, every year over the past decade[2].

[1] https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html
[2] Data on statistics on environmental migration (migrationdataportal.org)

Perhaps the reason that insufficient attention is paid to climate displacement is because most of it is ‘internal migration’, meaning that migrants are moving to areas within their own borders. Research commissioned by ActionAid and Climate Action Network South Asia, modelling climate change projections related to internal movement within five South Asian countries, indicates that climate change is either directly displacing people or accentuating hardship resulting in distress migration (Singh, Faleiro, Anderson, & Vashit, 2020). According to a 2021 World Bank Groundswell Report, there could be 216 million internal climate migrants across the globe by 2050, with “hotspots” (that is, areas that can no longer sustain human habitation) for climate migration emerging by 2030 (Clement, et al., 2021).

Food Security and Displacement

> "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”
>
> (World Food Summit, 1996).

This definition gives rise to four dimensions of food security: availability of food, accessibility (economically and physically), utilisation (the way it is used and assimilated by the human body), and stability of the previous three dimensions. (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2015).

Climate change has indisputable and severe impacts on food production since areas which experience droughts, floods or seawater inundation cannot sustain agriculture. A reduction in the levels of food produced can lead to a scarcity of supply especially where families rely on subsistence agriculture and the cost of accessible food rises when food supply and production are undermined. As a result, individuals who cannot afford food have fewer options to access it.

It is important to highlight that scarcity of supply and food-price inflation are not the sole outcome of climate change. The nutritional value of accessible food is similarly decreasing due in part to the impact of CO2 (which increases crop productivity but reduces nutritional quality) and poverty (with food outlets in poorer locations stocking foods with low nutritional values). According to the IPCC, an estimated 821 million people are currently undernourished, 151 million children under five are stunted, 613 million women and girls aged 15 to 49 suffer from iron deficiency, and 2 billion adults are overweight or obese (Mbow, et al., 2019).

As extreme weather events attributed to climate change become more prevalent and impact food production, the stability of interconnected food systems may be jeopardised due to short-term variability in supply (Wheeler & Von Braun, 2013). In addition to supply constraints is the impact on food quality. Insufficient energy intake is projected to increase by a median of 6, 12 and 14 per cent by 2050, depending the model used. This would equate to a median of 8, 24 and 80 million (full range of 1-183 million) additional people will be at risk of hunger because of climate change (Mbow, et al., 2019). If food and its means of production are not sustainable within an area, people living in that area will have no choice but to move, thereby acting as a driver of displacement.

Changes such as these require all countries to adapt to the new reality of a climate change impacted world. Yet not all countries bear the same responsibility for the emission of greenhouse gases, either historically or currently. Those countries which are most impacted by climate change must be supported. The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) has argued that there is an urgent need for more finance for adaptation across the board and for more climate finance to reach local actors to support local priorities and partnerships[3]. However, the international community is nowhere near meeting the $100 billion annual climate finance target set out in the Paris Agreement, reaching an estimated $79.6 billion in 2019 (OECD, 2021), a figure which is contested by Social Justice Ireland[4] and Oxfam[5]. This figure is also likely a gross underestimation, as it was based on political consensus rather than science.

[3] Currently, just 10 per cent of global climate finance reaches local actors, CDKN, 2021, p.19.
[4] Separate Commitments, Separate Targets, Same Money? | Social Justice Ireland, 2022
[5] True value of climate finance is a third of what developed countries report – Oxfam | Oxfam International, 2022

Climate Change and Food Security Case Study: The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is a region of eastern Africa and includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, with broader definitions including Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda (these countries are also in the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD)). The region is currently experiencing a predicted fifth failed rainy season, with the last rain in many areas of the region taking place in 2020[1]. The drought, the worst in the region in several decades, combined with the conflict in Ukraine disrupting global food distribution has intensified an already decades long crisis in the Horn of Africa.

Recent figures from OCHA released in August of this year estimate that 20 million people are experiencing emergency levels of food insecurity in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia[2]. It has been estimated that the drought in Somalia has displaced 1.1 million people since January 2021. The International Organisation for Migration's recent report states that in 2021, the East and Horn of Africa region had 13.2 million forcibly displaced persons, with 9.6 million of those being internally displaced[3].

A range of issues contribute to forced migration, including conflict, economic instability and climate change. The impact of climate change in the region can be seen through the prediction of a fifth failed rainy season, the increase in food insecurity and the intensification of regional weather patterns. The Horn of Africa is one of the most food-insecure regions in the world, with almost 44 per cent of the population living in food poverty[4].

The IGAD region is 70 per cent arid and semi-arid, in the Horn of Africa, structurally the poor are most concentrated within these arid and semi-arid ecosystems. Population growth and high levels of agricultural economic reliance in the area has led to an intensification of land cultivation, worsening the already vulnerable ecosystems, and ultimately threatening the future productivity of the land[5].

While the Horn of Africa is one of the world's regions most vulnerable to climate change, it contributes only 0.1 per cent of carbon emissions globally. The disproportionate risk and vulnerability experienced by the region in contrast to areas which contribute far higher carbon emissions highlights the global injustice of climate change contribution versus experience.

In Budget 2023, Minister Brophy announced immediate funding of €30 million for the Horn of Africa. The funding is a welcome aspect of Ireland's Overseas Development Aid budget. While ODA is necessary, with the UN estimating that funding of $4.4 billion is necessary to supply life-saving assistance in the Horn of Africa, governments and international organisations must begin to make provisions for forced displacement worldwide, and recognise that under current systems, more people and communities will be displaced, and they will need to be received somewhere.

This year's conflict in Ukraine has shown at a European level the impacts of forced migration, both on the migrants forced the flee their homes, and on the countries receiving high levels of people in need of resettlement, whether it be long-term or short. IGAD in 2012 adopted a Regional Migration Policy Framework, designed specifically to address migration and forced displacement at a regional level. There have been three declarations within this 'Nairobi Process', with the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action focusing on a regional approach to protecting and promoting self-reliance Somali refugees across the area. The Djibouti Declaration later ensured that there is access to quality education for not only refugees but returnees within the region, allowing an integrated education system to minimise disruption for the forcibly displaced. The Kampala Declaration focused on jobs and livelihoods, aiming to improve independence of refugees through economic inclusion[6].

This regional approach to integration of systems to accommodate forced displacement highlights the international and interconnected level of response needed to make provisions for a future where forced displacement becomes more frequent. Interventions must not be siloed, but require that governments, non-governmental organisations and international institutions work in an integrated manner to build systems which not only accommodate but to include forced migrants in the countries or regions into which they are being received.

Policy Responses

Resourcing vulnerable countries to respond to the impact of climate change assists governments to provide security and stability for their populations, alleviating factors driving involuntary and forced migration (Cubie, 2017). Both climate finance commitments and addressing loss and damage demands, discussed below, are crucial for this.

Climate Finance

At the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, developed countries pledged to provide $30 billion in funding for the years 2010-2012, as well as $100 billion in long-term financing by 2020 from a variety of sources. This $100 billion per year was intended to meet the needs of developing countries most impacted by climate change. The commitment, however, is based on the pledges of each participating developing country and does not include any criteria for determining how the quota should be assigned. The vast majority of this money was in the form of repayable loans, which add to unsustainable debt burdens and ultimately leave the costs still shouldered by the world's poorest. Climate finance is a responsibility and driven by the principle of polluter pays and a key pillar of the Paris Agreement.

A 2021 Working Paper from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (Colenbrander, et al., 2021) sought to provide a formula based on three metrics:

1. gross national income;
2. cumulative carbon dioxide emissions; and
3. population.

Acknowledging that this is not perfect, the authors offer these metrics as an indicative range to begin holding individual governments to account.

Using these metrics, the ODI analysis discovered that, among the 23 developed countries responsible for international climate funding, only Germany, Norway, and Sweden have paid their fair share of the annual $100 billion target. Every other country, including Ireland, falls short. In fact, the report noted that "Ireland should be contributing $364-900 million a year depending on which metric is used to attribute fair share. In 2017-2018, it provided an annual average of $199 million, or 33 per cent of its fair share measured against the composite index." (p.14).

Ireland has a proud record of providing Official Development Assistance (ODA), which has increased in the past number of years, however we still lack a strategy for reaching the UN-agreed 0.7 per cent target. Irish climate finance is provided publicly on a grant-basis, as opposed to through loans. There's an important focus on adaptation and building capacity and resilience in poorer countries. However, while a climate finance plan has been devised, with the publication of

the Climate Finance Roadmap (Government of Ireland, 2022) in July 2022, the connection of Climate Finance with ODA distorts reality - we are further behind in fulfilling our commitments than we publicly depict. Notwithstanding our current economic difficulties, Ireland must continue to recover lost ground in relation to our ODA and climate finance commitments.

In both Irish Aid's Climate and Environmental Finance Report 2020 (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2022) and the Irish International Climate Finance Roadmap, reference is made to Climate Finance representing approximately 10 per cent of Ireland's ODA in the years 2017 to 2020. Both also refer to a commitment to reach a €225m by 2025. Using the methodology set out in the ODI report referred to earlier, this would equate to roughly 73 per cent of Ireland's actual share of our Climate Finance target. Using these metrics, the real number would be closer to €308.2m.

Using updated data from the documents accompanying Budget 2023, we estimate that in order to meet both our ODA target of 0.7 per cent of national income, which we calculate on the basis of GNI*, and our Climate Finance Targets, Ireland's combined contribution would need to reach €2.45bn in 2025 on the basis of the ODI target or €2.36bn on the basis of the €225m target set out in the International Climate Finance Roadmap.

Loss and Damage

Alongside the devastating toll on human lives, the economic costs are skyrocketing. The costs of climate losses and damages are estimated to be USD 400 billion a year by 2030, rising to USD 1-1.8 trillion a year by 2050 for low-income countries alone[6].

Climate change-induced losses and damages affect everyone, but not equally. In particular, women living in rural communities at risk of economic marginalisation in the Global South—who bear the least responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions—are experiencing the worst impacts of the climate crisis and the greatest losses and damages. This is due in part to their dependency on natural resources for their income, sustenance, and health. It is also the result of pre-existing gender and other structural inequalities that prevent women from accessing the resources they need and from participating in decision making spaces. However, despite these challenges, women on the frontlines of the climate crisis are leading climate change responses and are central to effective climate action[7].

While ODA and Climate Finance are hugely important, the costs of climate devastation go beyond mitigation and adaptation for the increasing number of countries who have suffered its impact. A Discussion Paper produced by ActionAid in 2010 proposed including loss and damage as part of a 'climate debt framework' which includes three main elements: an emissions debt generated by

[6] Unpacking finance for Loss and Damage | Heinrich Böll Stiftung | Washington, DC Office - USA, Canada, Global Dialogue (boell.org)
[7] Women confronting loss and damage in Africa | ActionAid UK, 2022

wealthy countries for their excessive consumption leading to increased emissions; an adaptation debt - based on the disproportionate impact consumption by wealthier countries have had on climate change and its resultant impact on poorer countries; and loss and damage, compensation owed by wealthier countries in respect of countries where the impact of climate change is so severe that adaptation will have little or no impact (ActionAid, 2010).

ActionAid built on this framework and made a series of recommendations, calling for: an urgent focus on the Horn of Africa; the use of multilateral frameworks such as the UNFCCC; the establishment of a new financing facility for loss and damage; a gender responsive element to ensure inclusivity; and the scaling up by wealthier countries of climate finance contributions in the form of grants for loss and damage rather than loans (Action Aid, 2022). This follows similar calls from the EU Parliament[8] and organisations working in Latin America to move beyond merely providing humanitarian assistance to a comprehensive loss and damage framework (Goodman & Martinez, 2022).

Article 8 of the Paris Climate Agreement (2015) recognised "the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change…" and co-opted the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to collaborate with existing bodies, expert groups and others. There is currently no UN definition of loss and damage and determining attribution for climate-change loss and damage can be challenging. However, recent research to develop an economic protocol is encouraging (Philip, et al., 2020) as a mechanism for economic assessment through the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC was proposed in advance of COP25 in 2019. The Assessment would have set out a clear pathway to developing a Loss and Damage Facility and designating the Warsaw International Mechanism to act as an "international overseer" with responsibility to monitor and report on progress (Byrnes & Surminski, 2019). At COP26, countries established a two-year programme of work to establish a mechanism for loss and damage funding – however according to the World Resources Institute, little progress has been made, with the Bonn UN climate negotiations in June 2022 described as a "talk shop" by developing nations (World Resources Institute, 2022). The current COP27 has seen Loss and Damage on the agenda for the first time, marking a shift in the commitments from countries of the Global North, with Belgium, Austria, Australia and New Zealand among countries that have pledged dedicated Loss and Damage funds (UNFCCC, 2022). The inclusion of Loss and Damage, while encouraging, must be viewed as separate and additional to other forms of aid, rather than a subheading in pre-existing budgets. Commitments made at international meetings such as COP27 also need to be implemented and acted upon when the delegations return back to their countries.

As the impact of climate events continue to accelerate, resulting in devastating consequences for nations in the Global South, it is imperative that a funding mechanism is put in place with contribution targets for wealthy countries, and monitoring and accountability procedures to

[8] See resolution: Texts adopted - UN Climate Change Conference 2022 in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt (COP27) - Thursday, 20 October 2022 (europa.eu)

ensure commitments are followed through.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): The case for a holistic and human rights-based approach to addressing climate change and migration

Migration is a multi-dimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone (UNGC, 2018). By its very nature it demands a multi-disciplinary response from national and international Governments to provide a multi-faceted response.

On the one hand, as the vast majority of forced or involuntary migrants are internally displaced, we must have a policy focus on supporting people to stay in place where possible and if this is their wish. This support is particularly important given that many of the problems experienced by countries in the Global South are a result of the extractive policies of, and abuse of eco-systems by extractive industries from, the Global North (Hickel, Dorninger, Wieland, & Suwandi, 2022).

On the other hand, for those migrants who are displaced across borders, we must plan for migration and integration taking a whole-of government and society approach and shifting the narrative from one of "increased migration" to one of "population expansion". One only needs to compare Ireland's provision of supports to Ukrainians following the Russian invasion of Ukraine to the gross inadequacy of supports provided to other international protection applicants to get a sense of the scale of response required[9]. The Global North needs to shift its thinking to harnessing human capital who, when treated with respect and dignity, will contribute positively to a sustainable infrastructure.

[9] Our analysis of this response is contained in our paper 'Migrations in Our Common Home: Responding with Care – Ireland's Response to the Ukrainian Crisis available to download here: https://www.socialjustice.ie/publication/migrations-our-common-home-responding-care-irelands-response-ukrainian-crisis

Recommendations

Response to COP27

In his address at COP27, Taoiseach Micheál Martin confirmed Ireland's Climate Finance commitments of €225 million per year by 2025 in order to assist countries experiencing climate change challenges as set out in the Government's Climate Finance Roadmap launched earlier this year. Within this figure, €10 million of the overall commitment is to support the Global Shield initiative, as announced at COP27. The Global Shield is an insurance scheme for climate risk finance and preparedness.

While the Global Shield initiative is a sign that countries recognise the need to do something on loss and damage, this is a distraction. Insurance companies, by their very nature, are either reluctant to provide coverage, or reluctant to pay out. An initiative that involves Northern countries subsidising Northern-owned insurance corporations should not be mistaken for loss and damage finance that supports communities on the front lines of the climate crisis[10].

To be effective, our efforts must be linked to our responsibility for the causes of climate change. This Policy Briefing therefore makes recommendations at an international, EU and national level.

International-level Recommendation: Loss & Damage

A comprehensive and realistic plan for reparations for the loss and damage caused to Global South countries from climate change driven by the Global North must be developed, based on the 'polluter pays' principle. International actors must recognise that ODA and Climate Finance is not enough if internally displaced people are to rebuild their communities and livelihoods. We recommend that the Irish government and EU support and invest in a specific UN funding facility for loss and damage. As a step towards quantifying loss and damage, we recommend the promotion of resources such as the *Loss & Damage Handbook for community-led assessment of climate-induced loss and damage: a 7-step guide* to support communities to take charge of this assessment for themselves (Anderson, et al., 2019).

[10] https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/bfKEC98JwcPAowzHE-cBe?domain=trocaire.org

EU-level Recommendation: A Force for Change

As a Member of the EU, Ireland is able to advise and contribute to EU policy regarding climate change. As such, Ireland should campaign within the EU institutions for climate change action and funding to ensure all countries pay their fair share, based not only on their economies, but on their contributions to emissions.

The EU should contribute a fair share of climate finance, calculated in accordance with the ODI mechanism or other transparent calculation. The EU climate finance share to Least Developed Countries has reduced to less than 20 per cent and, of that, only one third of private finance goes towards adaptation.

It is crucial that climate finance is additional to ODA. These are different commitments made under different instruments. However, ODA should also be climate-proofed. Women and small holder farmers are already impacted by the climate crisis, and so there should be a focus on grants, adaptation and mechanisms that reach women and smallholders.
The EU should support a Just Transition in Agriculture in the EU and Global South, this should include strengthening its political and financial support to agroecology and women smallholder farmers in the Global South, whilst making sure women and civil society are engaged in the roll-out of the new EU Funding Framework (NDICI) and that gender mainstreaming and intersectionality is addressed (in line with GAP III).

The EU should support strengthening the Committee on World Food Security and other democratic, inclusive spaces of food governance, and not allow multi-stakeholderism and corporate-led initiatives to undermine these and ensure that women, particularly smallholder farmers should be heard at these spaces.

National-level Recommendation: Climate Finance and ODA

The Irish Government must acknowledge and accept that ODA, Climate Finance, and Loss and Damage, are three separate obligations and the allocation to each must be separated out in the annual Budget process. This would allow for greater transparency and accountability as we move towards targets which should be sufficiently ambitious to meet the challenge.

The Irish Government should continue its focus at the UN level of focusing on hunger, climate and conflict, and adaption to push for further use its position within international organisations, such as our current place on the UN Security Council, to promote climate action at all levels and for richer countries to take responsibility for our historic and current greenhouse gas emissions which are the driving cause of global climate change.

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