



Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change

Migration, Displacement and Planned Relocation the Pacific

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The movement of people from one area to another is an integral feature of many societies around the globe. Generally, people move in response to a variety of factors. While conflicts, persecution and disasters (natural, climate or development-induced) have been major causes of displacement and migration, other people move as labour migrants or in response to changing environmental conditions. Migration and displacement are therefore complex phenomena driven by many different interlinked factors, so the term 'human mobility' includes different types of movement.

Human mobility in the context of climate change has continued to attract substantial attention in international research and policy circles. In particular, the most recent assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes observed and ongoing changes in global climatic and ecological systems. These slow-onset changes, such as rising sea levels, salinisation and increasing temperatures, are having adverse impacts on the ability of populations to secure a livelihood and on their survival, especially in marginal areas. An increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as floods, cyclones, drought and heatwaves will adversely affect human populations. This is likely to contribute to an increase in water shortages, food insecurity and disease and create new vulnerabilities with the potential for displacement, emergence of new patterns of migration and in many cases planned relocation takes place as a last resort.

While the exact extent of climate change impacts on migration remains a subject of ongoing debate, there is widespread consensus that climate change already has – and will undoubtedly continue to have adverse effects on socio-economic conditions and thus undermine individuals' and societies' capacity to manage or adapt to the risks of climate change. Specifically, resilience is reduced as livelihoods are compromised, with adverse impact on food, water and economic security: it is projected that growing numbers of people are likely to be displaced or to decide to migrate or relocate as a response. An understanding

of different mobility patterns and the ways in which they relate to climate-induced shocks and stressors will therefore be critical to developing strategic and effective policy responses and adaptation measures.

Migration, displacement, and planned relocation may lead to disruption of traditional livelihoods and, if not managed properly, trigger human trafficking, forced labour, general discontent and violent conflict.

Effective management of human mobility, by contrast, may contribute to social, economic and cultural development and effective adaptation to climate change.

Key terms

► **Human mobility:** Human mobility results from multiple factors. In the context of the UNFCCC different types of climate-induced human mobility are differentiated: migration, displacement and planned relocation.

► **Migration:** People migrate for multiple reasons and when they have accumulated

the necessary resources and capabilities to do so. Migration is a more or less voluntary decision taken by an individual or family. Climate-induced migration usually takes place internally within state-borders. Even where slow-onset climate-related changes and extreme events cause cross-border migration, most people migrate regionally.

► **Displacement:** This is a frequently temporary process in which people are forced to move from their normal place of residence in response to a change in the political, social or economic environment. In the case of environmental change, displacement is mainly associated with extreme weather events and entire communities rather than individual households are affected by it.

► **Planned relocation:** Planned relocation is a process driven by an affected community and organised by a government. It may be large-scale or small-scale. In some instances, these processes are initiated by communities that face the threat of losing their place of residence because of the negative impact of climate change. The close involvement of the affected communities and host communities is crucial to successful planned relocation.



International Frameworks

In general terms, international policy has long given only limited recognition to migration and displacement induced by climate change, disasters and other environmental processes.

However, renewed international efforts have culminated in the recognition of climate change impacts on human mobility under the 2010 Cancun Agreement as part of the UNFCCC Adaptation Framework.

In 2015, at COP21, the Task Force on Displacement was created under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts to formulate recommendations for

addressing the adverse effects of climate change on displacement.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015- 2030), formulated with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, formerly UNISDR), is a non-binding agreement that seeks to tackle climate change-related disasters, displacement and migration in countries of origin.

The Nansen Initiative and the Platform on Disaster Displacement are non-binding, state-led international processes in developing recommendations to protect cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also identify the management of displacement as crucial to their achievement.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is rooted in the 2030 Agenda and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and is perhaps the most comprehensive intergovernmental framework that holistically covers all dimensions of migration, including climate-induced migration. Although the GCM is not legally binding, its objectives recognise changing socio-economic and environmental conditions and the implications they may have for migration.

The Global Programme on Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the GIZ Global Programme on Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (GP HMCCC) is working to support its partners in addressing and better understanding the complex, multi-causal interrelations between different forms of human mobility and climate change and their reciprocal effects, especially in small atoll and island states in the Pacific and Caribbean regions and in the Philippines. In collaboration with national and regional partners, non-governmental organisations and universities, GP HMCCC promotes exchange between all the actors involved. It aims at improving applied knowledge relating to the sustainable management of human mobility in the context of climate change in its partner regions.

Fields of action

The programme is focusing on:

- Supporting its partners at regional, national and sub-national level in managing human mobility in the context of climate change through participatory approaches.
- Developing information and resources on climate-induced human mobility. These processes will involve relevant stakeholders from partner countries and regions in identifying existing knowledge and closing subject-related gaps, e.g. through capacity building and institutionalising exchange platforms.
- Supporting international processes by feeding knowledge and experiences from the partner regions into German and international development cooperation.

The GP HMCCC approach includes the following measures:

- Working with local and regional partners for regional integration, strengthening integrated approaches to better managing climate change-induced mobility.
- Supporting capacity development by conducting training courses and workshops on climate change-induced mobility and climate risk management.
- Promoting long-term planning and strategic inclusion of human mobility and climate change aspects in development planning.
- Supporting capacity development and knowledge management by creating media tools such as short public information video clips.
- Piloting activities in local communities to raise awareness and increase resilience.

The Pacific Island Region

Human mobility in the context of climate change in the Pacific Island region

Pacific Island countries are experiencing increasing internal and cross-border migration, displacement and, as a last resort, voluntary and planned relocation as a result of multiple phenomena, including natural disasters, labour mobility and rapid urbanisation. Migration has always been important to the development of the Pacific region and, if well managed, can be beneficial to the people and their families.

In the Pacific region climate change impacts intensify underlying environmental challenges and fragile social, economic and political conditions. Therefore, it reduces resilience and exposes people to greater risk of displacement or motivates them to move elsewhere. In the future, the negative consequences of climate

change will continue to have significant impact on human mobility and will shape migration, displacement and planned relocation.

Unmanaged climate risks are projected to slow economic growth, compromise livelihoods, erode food security and create new forms of poverty. In coastal, urban and agriculture-dependent areas and emerging hotspots, including many Pacific Island nations, the impacts of climate change are already felt significantly.¹ In the Pacific region, densely populated coastal areas, which are highly exposed to climate events, would face losses of land and coastal infrastructure as a result of storm surges, flooding, shoreline erosion and general rises in sea levels. The failure of subsistence crops and coastal fisheries would also increase food insecurity.

In the Pacific, 13 island countries are classified by the UN as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). They share

similar constraints on development.²

Climate change is projected to cause more sudden-onset disasters in the Pacific, such as intense rainfall and cyclones, which immediately displace people. Slow-onset events such as rising sea levels and droughts will also increase in frequency and may have an impact on human mobility. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that small islands are recognised as being very sensitive to the impacts of climate change-related events. Small island nations will be disproportionately affected by rising sea levels, and some face the prospect of being entirely inundated. The IPCC Special Report (10/2018) highlights that some climate change impacts could be avoided if global warming were limited to 1.5°C (rather than 2°C). For the Pacific region, this would mean a slower rate of rise in sea levels and fewer people would then need to leave their homes or countries.³

¹ [FORTIETH SESSION OF THE IPCC. WORLD BANK REPORT 2000](#)

² [UN-OHRLS 2019](#)

³ [IPCC SR 2018 IPCC 2014](#)



Country and regional context

Through various programmes GIZ is active in all Pacific Island states that are negatively affected by the impacts of climate change. The GP HMCCC focusses especially on four countries, Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Because of various differences each of the four Island states has followed a unique development and deals differently with climate change and human mobility.

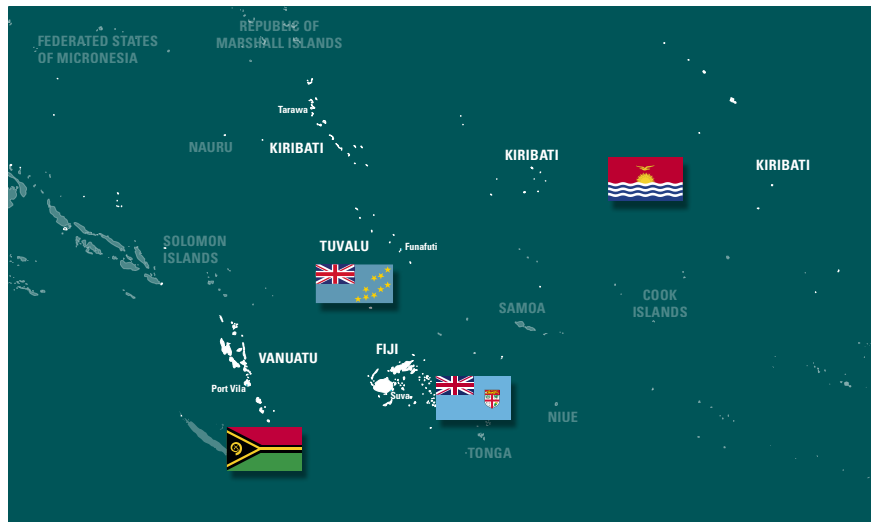
As a result, the GP HMCCC adapts to national and local needs in order to tackle a range of topics within the three different types of climate-induced human mobility.

Fiji

Fiji consists of two large mountainous islands of volcanic origin, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and over 300 smaller islands. About three quarters of Fijians live on Viti Levu's coasts, either in Suva or in smaller urban centres like Nadi and Lautoka, where coastal regions face an existential threat from rising sea levels. Because of its geographic conditions, relocation on higher ground may be an option in Fiji. The Government is pioneering policy development to provide equal support to all its coastal communities, whether they choose to stay or to relocate. With support from GP HMCCC, the Ministry of Economy's Climate Change and International Cooperation Division has finalised the National Planned Relocation Guidelines to assist with the planned relocation of ready-to-move communities. Furthermore, the EU-GIZ Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy programme is supporting two communities in their planned relocation activity with infrastructure and house building.

Kiribati

The country's economic development is constrained by climatic factors but also by its remoteness from international markets and the limited availability of natural resources. For 20 years, Kiribati has been working actively on adaptation to climate change. Given its extremely high vulnerability, climate change threatens the very existence of Kiribati's territory. The country has



developed widely acknowledged and pioneering climate change adaptation tools and methodologies. It has made a considerable contribution to the process of global and regional adaptation planning and management and to the development of a pool of knowledge on building climate resilience.

Tuvalu

By contrast with the larger mountainous states, Tuvalu is a low-lying small island state and classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC). Tuvalu's highest point is 4.6 metres above sea level. This makes Tuvalu extremely vulnerable to climate change and rising sea levels. The country has limited natural resources, and its economy is based on subsistence agriculture and fishing. Despite the population being extremely vulnerable, Tuvalu's Climate Change Policy aims at improving the living conditions of the population through in-situ adaptation to make them more resilient and to promote national sovereignty. Relocation is considered as an option of last resort. However, labour migration schemes exist for Tuvaluan citizens.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and natural disasters in the Pacific Island region. Its terrain is mostly mountainous and of volcanic origin, thus, being exposed to geological hazards. Vanuatu's economy is based primarily on subsistence agriculture and suffers from the negative effects of climate change. The country's major climate change concerns are rising sea levels and sea temperatures

and the possible increase in the intensity of cyclones and other major storm events. Climate variability and extremes will put more pressure on the prevalent small-scale agriculture.

By setting up its National Advisory Board for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB), Vanuatu has been able to integrate best practices in the areas of climate change and disaster risk reduction. Setting up the NAB has helped to significantly improve coordination and governance in climate change and disaster risk management, improving implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Each country has designed country-specific policies. At the regional level, policies and programmes have often been developed with the support of international organisations, development cooperation institutions and academic partners.

Regional and national policy responses and actions

While progress has been made at international level in addressing climate change-induced migration, most existing regional and national frameworks focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction. At regional level, the GP HMCCC works with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to establish a range of regional support mechanisms

to assist the Framework on Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and the Boe Declaration on Regional Security of the Pacific Island states. There is wide-ranging research⁴ and technical cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) coordinates Pacific climate change action. For its members, SPREP is a key conduit for making use of UNFCCC and Conference of the Parties processes, the Paris Agreement, and other global climate initiatives.

Pacific states in particular have established policies and guidelines for addressing human mobility. Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have led the way in incorporating planned relocation, the human rights of internally displaced persons and cross-border movements into their governance arrangements. Some of the existing frameworks include:



Levels	List of Existing Frameworks
National	Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2018
National	Fiji National Planned Relocation Guidelines 2018
National	Fiji National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030
National	Fiji Displacement Guidelines in the context of climate change and disasters 2019
National	Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030
National	Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change- and Disaster-Induced Displacement 2018 (with support from the IOM)
National	Tuvalu Climate Change Policy (TCCP) 2012-2021 National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (NSAP) 2012-2016
National	Kiribati National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2014-2023
Regional	Framework for Pacific Regionalism 2014 (PIFS)
Regional	The 'Blue Pacific' identity 2017 (PIFS)
Regional	Framework on Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017-2030
Regional	The United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022
Regional	Boe Declaration on Regional Security - The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in Nauru endorsed the Declaration in September 2018.

Vanuatu is one of the first countries globally to prepare a policy on internal displacement resulting from climate change and disaster. The Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change- and Disaster- Induced Displacement includes 1) recommended actions on local integration and planned relocation, 2) recommended actions on return and reintegration, and 3) integrating human mobility into development planning process. Through a common framework, the policy aims at assisting all people affected by displacement, whether triggered by a natural hazard or crisis (e.g. eviction).

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism (2014) is a regional approach addressing climate change and human mobility issues. The Framework has four objectives: 1) sustainable development, 2) economic growth, 3) strengthened systems, and 4) security for all. The economic and political integration enables the free movement of persons and goods within and among countries. Since 2017, the Framework also promotes a common identity, the 'Blue Pacific' identity, as a core driver of collective action in order to advance the Framework's vision.

⁴ Farbotko et. al 2018: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/app5.254>

The Framework on Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017-2030⁵ provides high-level strategic guidance for different stakeholder groups on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters. The FRDP also encourages Pacific countries and development partners to tackle human mobility considerations by creating targeted national policies and actions, such as labour migration policies and planned relocation.

Migration policies in the Pacific region

There are a number of national, bilateral and regional migration policies within the Pacific. Historical ties with Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France mean that Pacific nations have varying degrees of privileged entry. New Zealand recognises the special relationship with its neighbours and has a quota for citizens of Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga and Tuvalu to migrate to New Zealand through the Pacific Access Category scheme. The government of New Zealand is considering changes in its immigration policy to include climate change-induced migration, but it is unclear if this will happen in the near future.⁶

In the 2015 Tuvalu National Labour Migration Policy, for example, climate change is identified as one reason for increasing efforts to find labour mobility options abroad.

Ongoing GIZ activities in the four countries

The GP HMCCC provides technical, advisory, knowledge management and awareness raising support in the four focus countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). Based on in-country national consultations and regional baseline assessment results, the GP HMCCC works on the development of national policies and guidelines to institutionalise the human mobility concepts within the legal frameworks of the focus countries.



Awareness raising and knowledge sharing at national, sub-national and community level (e.g. photo exhibitions and videos) cover the areas of climate-induced human mobility and human security to explore the security dimensions of migration, displacement and relocation.

Through the Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (ACSE) Programme implemented and administered by GIZ, the EU is assisting Pacific Island Countries to enhance sustainable livelihoods and strengthen countries' capacity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. The GIZ-led component in Fiji is supporting the relocation of a district school in Lakeba, Lau province, while households in the village of Narikoso are being assisted to move to new climate-proof houses with solar-home systems.

Relocation guidelines have been drawn up based on experiences acquired during these relocation processes. The Planned Relocation Guidelines - A Framework To Undertake Climate Change-Related Relocation document was presented in 2017 at the UN climate conference COP23 and published the following year.⁷

With the continued support from GIZ, the Fijian Government has developed

Displacement Guidelines that aim to reduce the vulnerabilities associated with displacement and consider durable solutions to prevent and minimize the drivers of displacement in affected communities in Fiji.⁸ Further, the Fijian Government has published the National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030 (NCCCP) which addresses the different forms of human mobility.⁹

The impacts of climate change affect individuals disproportionately. A compendium focuses on the gender dimensions of climate-related human mobility that encompass the multiple pathways of migration, displacement and planned relocation and presents lessons learnt and practices associated with documented case studies in the Pacific.¹⁰ As part of the Framework on Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and following the Pacific Resilience Meeting, a Technical Working Group (TWG) on Human Mobility has been established in order to promote and strengthen efforts at the regional and national levels to address human mobility.¹¹

⁸ [Displacement Guidelines – In the context of climate change and disasters](#)

⁹ [Republic of Fiji. National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030](#)

¹⁰ [Human Mobility, Climate Change and Gender. Compendium of best practices, lessons learnt and tools for Pacific practitioners](#)

¹¹ <http://www.resilientpacific.org/technical-working-groups/>



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