

International Organization for Migration



Briefing

21 October 2015

Migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change

Jo De Backer

IOM Regional Office Brussels

jdebacker@iom.int



Migration puts the human at the center of the climate debate



© IOM 2013 Alan Motus



What is an environmental migrant?

A Working Definition, IOM 2007

*“**Environmental migrants** are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.”*

IPCC 5th Assessment Report (2014)

“Changes in migration patterns can be responses to both extreme weather events and longer-term climate variability and change, and **migration** can also be an **effective adaptation strategy.**”

Emergent Risks and Key Vulnerabilities,
in: IPCC 2014, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*

(2014:IOM Observer status with IPCC)



IOM's main objectives

- i. To prevent forced migration resulting from environmental factors through preparedness and disaster risk reduction
- ii. To provide assistance and protection to affected populations and seek durable solutions where forced migration does occur
- iii. To facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change.



IOM's key messages

- i. Multicausal and multidimensional problem
- ii. Giving a human face to the climate change debate
- iii. Human mobility as a barometer of resilience and vulnerability
- iv. Migration as an adaptation option



Migration, Environment and Climate Change

IOM's activities & work

- Research
- Advocacy
- Policy dialogue and guidance on policies and practices
- Capacity Building
- Partnerships and cooperation
- Communication and information sharing
- Operational activities





Framing a complex issue

Human Mobility

Migration

Displacement

Planned Relocation

In the context of the UNFCCC: different facets of the same complex issue: internal, cross-borders, forced, voluntary movements

Migration as Adaptation

Migration can:



©John Vink/ Magnum Photos for IOM - MKH0197

→ Migration is **one possible adaptation strategy**

- Reduce population pressure on fragile ecosystems
- Save lives in case of disasters
- **Strengthen livelihoods** through income diversification via remittances and the transfer of knowledge and skills



Human Mobility and UNFCCC

Key Question:

How to integrate a complex issue (migration in all its forms) in a complex process (UNFCCC negotiations)?

Where is migration in the UNFCCC?

**Cancún Adaptation Framework (CAF)
COP 16, 2010**

Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels.

14 f (Section II, Cancún Agreement)

Where is migration in the UNFCCC?

Doha Decision on Loss and Damage, COP 18, 2012

*Acknowledges the further work to advance the understanding of and expertise on **loss and damage**, which includes, inter alia, the following: Enhancing the understanding of ...*
How impacts of climate change are affecting patterns of migration, displacement and human mobility.

2012, Paragraph 7 (a) (vi)



Human Mobility and UNFCCC

In the UNFCCC process: the NAP entry point

- Integrating migration into National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)
- Because the national adaptation planning process provides a comprehensive assessments of development needs in relation to climate

NAPS can address migration in two ways:

1. Through adaptation plans to reduce the pressure of migration and avoid displacement and the need for planned relocation
 2. Through adaptation plans that envision migration as an adaptation strategy
- strategy

Adaptation and NAP

Concrete action: **Providing policy relevant evidence and research**

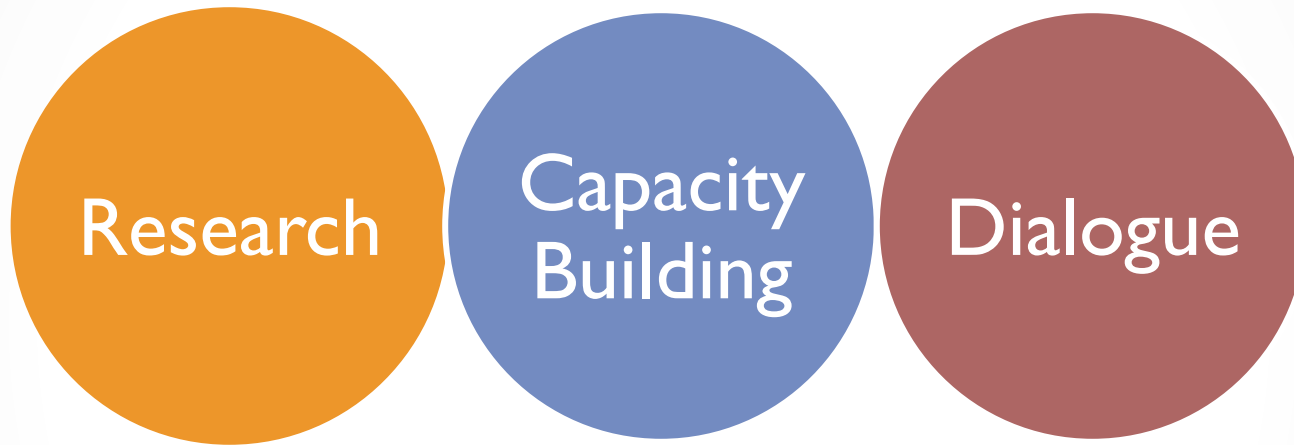
IOM - Migration, Environment and Climate Change:

Evidence for Policy (MECLEP) Project

Duration: 3 years (January 2014 – December 2016)

Budget: 2.4 million Euros

MECLEP: Three Components to find policy answers

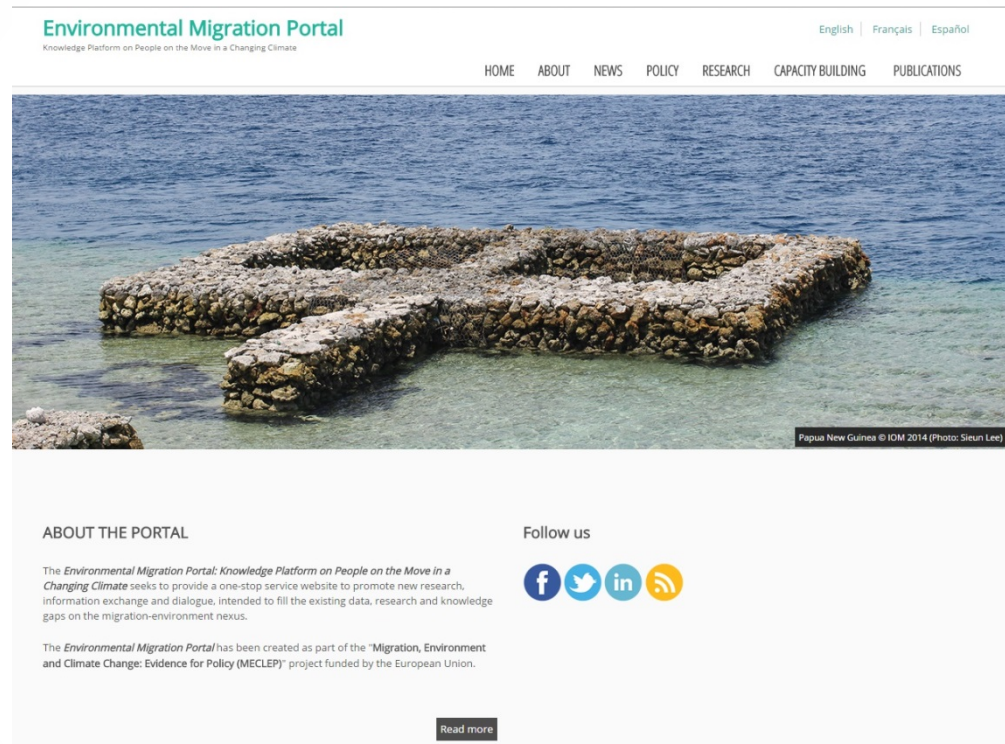


How can migration, displacement and relocation enhance or impede efforts to adapt to climate change?

- ✓ Migration as determinant of vulnerability: does it increase adaptive capacity or hinder it?
- ✓ What policies can be facilitated?

Environmental Migration Portal

<http://environmentalmigration.iom.int/>



Environmental Migration Portal
Knowledge Platform on People on the Move in a Changing Climate

English | Français | Español

HOME ABOUT NEWS POLICY RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING PUBLICATIONS

Papua New Guinea © IOM 2014 (Photo: Steun Lee)

ABOUT THE PORTAL

The *Environmental Migration Portal: Knowledge Platform on People on the Move in a Changing Climate* seeks to provide a one-stop service website to promote new research, information exchange and dialogue, intended to fill the existing data, research and knowledge gaps on the migration-environment nexus.

The *Environmental Migration Portal* has been created as part of the "Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP)" project funded by the European Union.

Follow us

Read more

Follow us @IOM_MECC

For more information on the MECLEP project, please visit: www.iom.int/meclep