



Responses of IOM Country and Regional Offices to 2013 Institution-Wide Survey on Migration, Environment and Climate Change

2013 SURVEY ON ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

In spring 2013, IOM conducted a survey on environmental migration among its Missions worldwide. The aim of this exercise was:

- To assess the relevance of the issue of migration related to environment and climate change across countries;
- To measure the level of importance of environmental migration among other priorities in IOM offices worldwide;
- To assess existing data on this topic available in IOM offices in the field.

The survey was conducted as part of the preparatory work for a forthcoming ICP publication, the first Atlas on Environmental Migration, bringing together data, case studies and analysis of environmental migration, and related problems, issues, as well as opportunities.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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The survey was completed by 54 IOM offices in 53 countries, primarily located in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Europe. The contributions made by IOM offices worldwide have demonstrated the increasing importance and relevance of the issue in many countries. Migration trends related to diverse environmental factors, including climate change, are a reality on every continent. To many respondents, there is a clear necessity to continue work on this important subject.

Yet, a clear lack of comprehensive and reliable data on this subject, and the absence of migration in national environmental and climate-related policies, programmes and strategies, are a strong barrier to addressing this problem in most of the affected countries.

Scope of the Survey

The questions focused on the following issues:

- Environmental hazards causing or likely to cause migration;
- Trends in environmental migration flows (duration, geographical extent);
- Vulnerable groups;
- State-led relocation projects;
- Existence of statistical data on environmental migration in the country;
- Relevant national legislation and policy documents;
- National institutional capacity;
- Examples of national- or local-level projects, plans and best practices;
- Camp management and conflict.

Key Findings

- **45** respondent countries have experienced environmental migration. This represents nearly **a third** of IOM member countries.
- Migration related to environmental and climate change is **an established reality** in many countries worldwide, regardless of the region in which they are located, although European countries tend to be less affected by this phenomenon.
- Regardless of the existence of migration trends related to environmental and climate change in the country, most respondents expressed interest in the topic and **willingness to support work in this field**, which most of them considered as important.
- **Floods** are the most cited cause of environmental migration, closely followed by **droughts**. **Changing rainfall patterns** are the third most cited environmental factor causing migration.

- The answers provided in the survey showed how **complex and multifaceted** this phenomenon is: there is **no clear pattern with regard to the form and duration** of migration induced by environmental factors.
- **Most environmental migration is internal**, and that cross-border migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation is limited.
- According to the majority of respondents, **rural populations, women and children are most vulnerable** to environmental change, disasters, and related migration.
- **Environmental migration is generally absent from national legislation and national adaptation, or disaster risk reduction plans and programmes**. Only 20 respondents indicated the existence of national legislation to protect people displaced by natural disasters, and only 2 (Ghana and Sri Lanka) indicated that legislation existed to protect people in the event of slow onset environmental change.
- **Reliable statistics on environmental migration remains scarce**. Most respondents highlighted the insufficiency or absence of data despite the necessity to have such information; only 9 indicated availability of data.

Conclusions

- The survey showed that there is substantial interest in, as well as potential and necessity for capacity-building for further research and policy design in the area of environmental migration.
- Specifically, there is a need to: strengthen political awareness of the issue at the national level; strengthen the capacity to conduct research and collect statistical data on a regular basis; design and implement relevant cross-cutting policies, strategies and national programmes.

For more information, please visit:

www.iom.int/cms/envmig

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