

# FOCUS ON MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MECC) AT THE 105TH IOM COUNCIL –

(25–27 NOVEMBER 2014)



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The migration, environment and climate change nexus has gained prominence as a thematic policy area on national, regional and global agendas. There is now wide recognition that human mobility, in both its forced and voluntary forms, is increasingly affected by environmental and climatic factors, while migratory movements, in turn, may have an impact on the environment.

Recently, the 2014 Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reaffirmed the high level of scientific agreement on the causal link between climate change and an increased displacement of populations, as well as the importance of migration as a strategy for adapting to these developments.

In recognition of the increasing significance of the migration, environment and climate change nexus, the IOM 105th Council Session, convened on 25–27 November 2014, included a special focus on climate and the environment. Within the framework of the Council, a number of high-level events were dedicated to examining the linkages between migration, environment and climate change with a double objective to i) bring climate and environment to the forefront of IOM's institutional agenda, and ii) contribute to relevant global policy processes.

## **IOM's engagement on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC)**

IOM's work on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) has greatly expanded in the past five years, both in terms of the number of activities and as regards IOM's engagement in external policy processes. Environmental and climatic factors are increasingly more visible and integrated in IOM's activities at all levels: policy, research, international migration law, operations, advocacy, communication and capacity-building.

In order to continue stepping up IOM's engagement in this thematic area, IOM Director General announced at the beginning of the 105th Council the creation of a dedicated institutional structure within the organization, tasked with leading IOM's work on migration, environment and climate change, the "Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division". The Division became operational as from 1 January 2015.

### **About the IOM Council**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council is the Organization's highest governing body. A full session of the IOM Council is convened yearly and acts as a leading international policy forum for debate on migration-related issues.

*"Climate change is projected to increase the displacement of people throughout this century. The risk of displacement increases when populations who lack the resources to migrate experience higher exposure to extreme weather events, in both rural and urban areas, particularly in low-income developing countries. 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." (IPCC 2014)*



# HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT — PANEL ON “HUMAN MOBILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE” (26 NOVEMBER 2014)



IOM's membership has selected migration, environment and climate change as an area for policy dialogue on several occasions, notably during the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) in 2011 and the Standing Committee for Programme and Finances (SCPF) in June 2014. In that respect, the November 2014 High-Level Panel represented a critical landmark in the continuation of the dialogue between IOM and its Member States on this topic.

The Panel also represented the occasion to stake stock of and contribute to a number of policy processes important to the international governance of migration; notably the 2015 negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the second Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2), the post-2015 development framework and the conclusion of the Nansen Initiative.

The high-level segment on Human Mobility, Environment and Climate (item 12 of the agenda) started with a video message from Ms Christina Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The panelists were Ms Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Mr Marcelo Mena Carrasco, Vice-Minister of Environment of Chile, Mr Shameem Ahsan, Permanent Representative of

Bangladesh to the United Nations Office in Geneva, and Mr Claude Wild, Ambassador, Head of the Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Switzerland.

Following the initial presentations, the Deputy Director General, acting as moderator, opened the floor for delegates' questions and comments. In the ensuing discussions, 14 member states and 10 observers took the floor to debate of the nexus between migration, environment and climate change. Member States expressed their support of IOM's role in this thematic area and welcomed the cross-cutting nature of the organization's activities as well as its efforts to reach out to, and include affected populations.

Member States made several recommendations: i) IOM should continue its work on the migration, environment and climate change nexus in collaboration with other agencies; ii) it is critical to conduct research to collect substantive data to clarify the links between climate change and migration; iii) as negotiations to reach a global climate change agreement are underway in 2015, efforts to raise awareness on human mobility and climate within the UNFCCC process should continue, in cooperation with all relevant partners. The Press Briefing note is available: [www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-council-calls-for-enhanced-a.html](http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-council-calls-for-enhanced-a.html).

# HIGH-LEVEL LUNCHEON: “CLIMATE CHANGE, MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT”

(26 NOVEMBER 2014)

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The High-Level Luncheon was co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The event was organized by the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and IOM in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Luncheon aimed at engaging a wide range of stakeholders in a policy conversation on the linkages between climate change, migration and displacement. This event also represented an important step in the reinforcement of the partnership between IOM and the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Migration and displacement issues represent one of the areas of engagement of the CVF 2013–2015 Action Plan and IOM and the CVF Trust Fund signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2014 to develop policy-focused activities in this area.

The luncheon brought together over 60 Permanent Representatives, Ambassadors and senior delegates of missions and delegations to the United Nations at Geneva with international partners and experts, including the panelists who intervened during the High-Level Panel held the same day.

The participants brought up a number of key questions related to the governance and management of human mobility in a changing climate, such as land and desertification, gaps in legal frameworks and the potential of migration as a positive adaptation strategy.

A Press Briefing note is available: [www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-joins-climate-vulnerable-for.html](http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-joins-climate-vulnerable-for.html).



### About the Climate Vulnerable Forum

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is a climate change-focused cooperation platform launched in 2009 involving more than 20 developing countries from all key regions of the world. The CVF, currently chaired by the Philippines following the leadership of Costa Rica, has held major meetings in Maldives, commissioned independent research, convened expert panels and stimulated multi-lateral dialogue all aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of responses to climate change. IOM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are partners in the CVF Trust Fund and support and engage a range of CVF policy-focused activities together with other partners. The CVF Trust Fund has benefitted from the generous contributions of Bangladesh, Norway and Switzerland, and the parallel support of Germany. Bangladesh is the CVF lead country on migration and displacement issues.

## Enhancing Partnerships

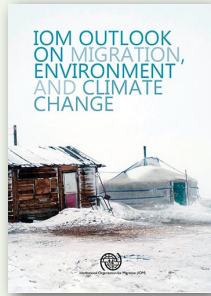
IOM and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) formalized their ongoing activities through the signature of a partnership agreement on migration, climate and land. The partnership aims to increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to these interlinked phenomena and to create the political momentum for including them in the sustainability, human rights, security and climate adaptation agendas.

IOM welcomed new observers to the Organization who work closely on human mobility, environment and climate: the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Enhanced collaboration with these institutions paves the way for interdisciplinary work that fits the cross-cutting nature of the migration, environment and climate link.

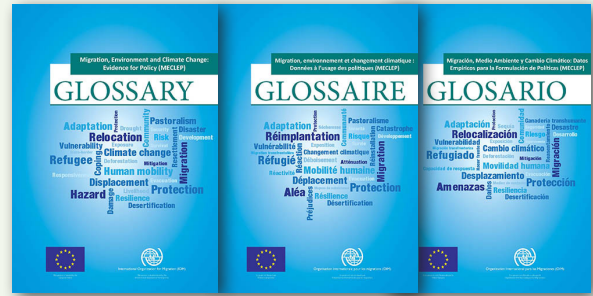
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## IOM Flagship Publication



IOM launched a new publication: *IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change*, which shares IOM's institutional knowledge gathered over the past 20 years in this field. The book is available from the IOM Bookstore [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MECC\\_Outlook.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MECC_Outlook.pdf).



IOM shared the Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP) Glossary in English, French and Spanish.



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Laura Thompson  
Deputy Director General – IOM

### Photo Exhibit: “Environmental Migrants: the Last Illusion”

IOM organized an exhibition at the United Nations Palais des Nations in Geneva, on 25–28 November: “*Environmental Migrants: the Last Illusion*” by award winning photographer Alessandro Grassani. Complementary to the High-Level events organized during the Council, the exhibition aimed to bring the human at the center of the climate debate, encouraging a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by environmental migrants through a series of striking images.

A short video is available from YouTube: <http://youtu.be/q64zj6qybC8>.

For more information on IOM's activities in the area of migration, environment and climate change please visit the environmental migration portal <http://www.iom.int/cms/envmig>, IOM website <http://www.iom.int/migration-and-climate-change> or contact:

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