

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)



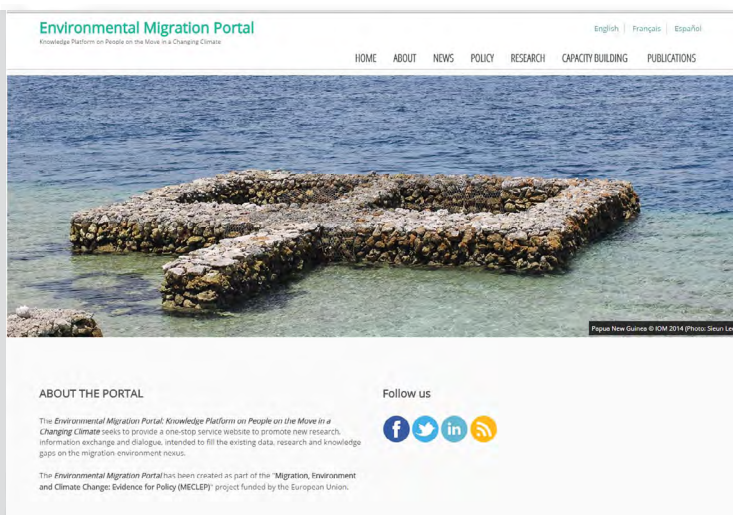
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

© IOM 2015

For updated information on IOM work on migration, environment and climate change, please visit the IOM Environmental Migration Portal

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

Follow us on Twitter: [@IOM_MECC](https://twitter.com/IOM_MECC)



The path to a peaceful and secure future is paved with decisive actions against losing more productive land. Migration is often a last-resort option for those experiencing water shortages and crop failures. Rehabilitating land, making it profitable again and creating stable jobs gives people options to stay or move to the closest place where opportunities are offered.

Monique Barbut

Executive Secretary

United Nations Convention
to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Migration should be part of the toolbox that we consider on how we can best deal with land degradation and related pressures. It is also important to underline that, no matter whether endorsed and promoted by public policies or not, migration and mobility will be one of the ways in which people will deal with increasingly hostile and unfriendly environments.

Ambassador Laura Thompson

Deputy Director General

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Keynote Speech, Caux Dialogue on Land and Security 2014

This document has been prepared by Mariam Traore Chazalnoël, Associate Expert, Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC), in coordination with Dina Ionesco, Head of the IOM MECC Division, and Barbara Bendandi, Policy Officer, MECC.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Where is migration in the UNCCD Process?

Established in 1994, the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#) is one of the [three Rio Conventions](#), along with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity. UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development to sustainable land management (SLM). With 195 Parties, it is the world's most ratified environmental treaty. The main goal of the Convention is to improve the living conditions of people affected by **land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought**, in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

In countries affected by desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), these phenomena are among the major drivers of migration as people are forced to or decide to leave areas of origin where they can no longer sustain their livelihoods. UNCCD notes, "In rural areas where people depend on scarce productive land resources, land degradation is a driver of forced migration."¹ Today, 52 per cent of the land used for agriculture is moderately or severely degraded and "an estimated 42% of households intensify their seasonal mobility in the event of poor harvests, while 17% migrate when there is crop destruction and 13% leave in the case of strong climatic events such as extreme droughts."² This represents millions of people who already are or will be concerned by human mobility choices.

Through its mandate to develop SLM systems and encourage sound land use planning, investments and the restoration of degraded and abandoned land, the UNCCD can directly address the DLDD drivers behind forced forms of migration but also harness the potential of migrants in areas of destination to support and invest in viable land-based adaptation and land rehabilitation initiatives.

Why is IOM involved in the implementation of the UNCCD?

As the leading intergovernmental migration agency, IOM is committed to work on the [human mobility, climate change and environment nexus](#). In the last two decades, IOM has developed a comprehensive programme of work on this topic at operational, research, policy and advocacy level. IOM seeks to support the Organization's Member States to meet increasingly complex migration challenges in the context of environmental and climatic changes. IOM is also working closely with the UNFCCC³ to promote the recognition of migration as an adaptation strategy and ensure the protection of migrants displaced in connection to climate change.

In the UNCCD context, IOM is bringing its expertise to work on various aspects of the DLDD and human mobility nexus:

- Document evidence that DLDD is a key driver of human mobility and build scenarios to characterize future migration patterns, increased vulnerability and potential security risks;

¹ UNCCD, *Desertification: The Invisible Frontline* (UNCCD, Germany, 2014).

² Ibid.

³ More information on IOM and the UNFCCC is available from: <http://environmentalmigration.iom.int/iom-contributions-%E2%80%9Cyear-climate%E2%80%9D-paris-2015>

- Provide assistance to individuals, households and communities who resort to mobility strategies to cope with DLDD;
- Promote policy coherence across sectors and develop capacity-building programmes to ensure that migration linked to land degradation is addressed and that land-based opportunities are leveraged by relevant field interventions;
- Develop a package of measures and incentives to offer land-based opportunities to migrants and diasporas, taking into account their willingness to diversify their incomes, relocate to new areas or return to their areas of origin; and
- Encourage the involvement of diaspora communities to establish investment opportunities that can support adaptation and land rehabilitation and take into account the specificities of environmental migration.

How is IOM contributing to the UNCCD process?

IOM and UNCCD: An innovative partnership

On 26 November 2014 in Geneva, IOM and UNCCD signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the 105th session of the IOM Council, the Organization's supreme governing body. The MOU signature officially launched a structured collaboration on the land-migration nexus. The partnership aims to increase understanding of challenges and opportunities related to the interlinkages between human mobility and land degradation and create political momentum to bring these questions across global policy agendas. The IOM-UNCCD strategy for action focuses on three key areas of collaboration: (a) climate change adaptation; (b) rights and security; and (c) sustainable development.



Read our press release at: <http://www.iom.int/news/iom-and-unccd-launch-partnership-jointly-address-negative-cycle-land-degradation-forced>

From left: Ms Laura Thompson, IOM Deputy Director General; Monique Barbut, UNCCD Executive Secretary; and William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General. © IOM 2014

Development of innovative joint activities in West Africa and Italy

IOM and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD are implementing a joint project titled "West Africa: Promoting sustainable land management in migration-prone areas through innovative financing mechanisms,"⁴ funded by the Italian Development Cooperation. The project targets three countries of origin (Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal), as well as

one country of destination (Italy) through activities that focus on two dimensions:

a. Research and policy:

- (i) Assessments on the root causes of migration and its linkages with DLDD, as well as the opportunities to increase investments in SLM and land rehabilitation in the three target countries;
- (ii) Analysis of vulnerability and resilience in the context of land degradation in West Africa;

⁴ More information on this project is available on the IOM Environment Migration Portal: <http://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/Flyer-SLM-Migration%20project.pdf>

- (iii) Policy development to improve internal and intra-African migration management and improve access to credit to invest on land in migration-prone areas at national and regional level; and
- (iv) Promotion of political dialogue in West Africa on land degradation, climate change and migration.

b. Provide sustainable land management opportunities to members of the Senegalese diaspora residing in Italy:

- (i) Facilitation of the dialogue between government and diaspora on SLM opportunities to channel and promote diaspora investments for land rehabilitation: outline benefits for adaptation and resilience at household and communities levels, as well as prospects for profit and business development; and
- (ii) Support to migrant entrepreneurs through the publication of a guide for diaspora investments and support to the establishment of an office in Italy to provide information on SLM investment opportunities in Senegal.

Outcome papers of the joint IOM/UNCCD Project

- « *Faciliter les investissements de la diaspora burkinabè dans la réhabilitation et la gestion durable des terres (GDT) au Burkina Faso* »
- « *Les liens entre la migration et la désertification, dégradation des terres et sécheresse au Burkina Faso* »
- « *Les liens entre la migration et la gestion durable des terres (GDT) au Niger* »
- « *Les mécanismes de promotion des investissements de la diaspora dans la réhabilitation des terres et la résilience au changement climatique au Niger* »
- « *Migration et désertification, dégradation des terres et sécheresse au Sénégal* »
- « *Investissement de la diaspora dans la réhabilitation et la gestion durable des terres (GDT) au Sénégal* »

National consultation workshops to review the joint outcome papers

- Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 9–10 April 2015
- Niamey, Niger, 13–14 April 2015
- Dakar, Senegal, 23–24 April 2015

UNCCD COP 12

As Parties to the UNCCD convene in October 2015 in Ankara, Turkey, for the Convention's Twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP 12), IOM and UNCCD will ensure that human mobility feature in the agenda of COP 12. COP 12 also represents an important contribution in the lead-up to the UNFCCC COP 21 conference, to be held in Paris in December 2015, where a new global climate agreement is expected to be reached. Both organizations are working together to bring contributions to the UNFCCC process, with the objective of highlighting questions of: (a) migration and land-based adaptation; (b) migration, land and human security; and (c) innovative financial instruments that integrate migrants and diasporas as active actors of the fight against climate change.

Development of an agenda of collaboration between IOM and UNCCD in South America

IOM and UNCCD have developed a regional cooperation agenda for South America, which was approved in early 2015. The Agenda envisions: (a) joint collaboration in national and regional capacity-building activities; (b) development of joint events and messaging on key International Days; and (c) collaboration on research and investigation.

Publications

- The UNCCD is supporting the development of IOM's groundbreaking publication "[Atlas of Environmental Migration](#)" (forthcoming 2015), which is prefaced by Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD; William L. Swing, Director General of IOM; and Nicolas Hulot, Special Envoy for the Planet of the French Presidency.
- **UNCCD Global Land Outlook:** IOM Deputy Director General, Ms. Laura Thompson, is part of the Steering Group of this new UNCCD flagship publication; currently under development and expected to be published every four years.

Joint Papers

- *Vulnerability and Resilience in West Africa: Understanding human mobility in the context of land degradation* – KNOMAD Working Group on Migration and Environment (forthcoming in 2016)
- *The impact of the National Adaptation Plans and the potential improvements to address human mobility from a comparative South-South perspective* – KNOMAD Working Group on Migration and Environment (forthcoming in 2015)
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the International Organization for Migration Partnership: Addressing land, sustainable development and human mobility. In K. Rosenow-Williams and F. Gemenne (eds), *Organizational Perspectives on Environmental Migration*, Routledge Studies in Development, Mobilities and Migration (Routledge, London, 2015)
- *Remittances for adaptation: an 'alternative' source of climate finance?* IOM-UNU-GDI book project on *Migration, risk management, and climate change: Evidence and policy responses* (forthcoming in 2015)
- IOM and UNCCD Joint Information Sheet: *Migración, Desertificación, Degradación de Tierras, Sequías Cambio Climático en América del Sur*

Capacity-building

Regional IOM capacity-building event – Santiago, Chile (2014): UNCCD was invited by IOM to contribute to an event on migration, environment and climate targeting policymakers in South America. The training took place in Santiago, Chile, in October 2014.

Events

UNCCD Third Scientific Conference – Global Land Outlook Meeting: Contributions by IOM on land tenure and post-disaster reparation.

IOM 105th Council – Geneva, Switzerland (2014)⁵: High-level intervention by Ms Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

Caux Dialogue on Land and Security – Caux, Switzerland (2014): Keynote speech delivered by Ms Laura Thompson, IOM Deputy Director General.

High-level Meeting on National Drought Policies – Geneva, Switzerland (2013): High-level intervention by M William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General.

⁵ More information on the IOM 105th Council at http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MECC_Thematic_Global_Report.pdf

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

KEY MESSAGES

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) —
TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 12)
ANKARA, TURKEY — OCTOBER 2015

Desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) are drivers of migration.



© UNEP 2011

Human mobility can take different forms in the context of DLDD: displacement caused by slow onset disasters such as droughts, rural-rural and rural-urban movements, temporary circular mobility patterns in search of livelihood alternatives or longer-term migration internally, regionally and internationally. It can be difficult to isolate the climatic and DLDD factors in mobility decisions, and the distinction between forced displacement and voluntary migration can be blurred. For this reason, it is critical to continue efforts to assess and understand the linkages between human mobility and DLDD.

Well-managed migration can be an adaptation strategy to slow-onset events like DLDD.



© IOM 2015

Migration can either aggravate or reduce the negative effects of land degradation and land scarcity. In many cases, migration is considered

as a factor that can increase competition over scarce resources or add pressure on overstretched environments and cities. However, migration can also be a mitigating factor as pressures on vulnerable areas and potential conflicts are reduced. In many cases, migration does not equate with a desire to leave one's home. On the contrary, migration – particularly temporary or seasonal forms – is often used as a way of maintaining livelihoods to be able to stay.

In rural areas facing livelihood stress, migration usually provides additional income in the form of remittances. Diversification of income sources makes households less vulnerable to the negative effects of environmental change. Seasonal migration can be an essential income stream in areas where environmental conditions no longer allow year-round agriculture.

Global partnerships are needed to support diaspora and migrant contributions.



© IOM 2015

More emphasis needs to be placed on the migrants themselves. It is important to acknowledge that migrants and diasporas can serve adaptation purposes through remittances, investments and knowledge transfers. IOM is committed to support UNCCD to advance policy and operational work on ways to best harness the potential of migrants to contribute to adaptation efforts in their countries of origin.

For more information, please go to: <http://environmentalmigration.iom.int/>

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

Dina Ionesco

Head of Division – Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division (IOM Geneva)

E-mail: dionesco@iom.int

Tel. +41 22 717 9481

Barbara Bendandi

Policy Officer – Migration, Environment and Climate Change (IOM Rome)

E-mail: bbdendandi@iom.int

Mariam Traore Chazalnoël

Associate Expert – Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division (IOM Geneva)

E-mail: mchazalnoel@iom.int



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150 • E-mail: hq@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int