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A STUDY ON THE GENDER & SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE MIGRATION

CLIMATE KEY ACTIVITY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: LOSS AND DAMAGE BEYOND REPAIR

Climate crisis, as we know it

2018 and 2019 have been years of intense climate change and related (in)/action. From the IPCC Special Report in October 2018[1], we witnessed cyclonic storms (America[2], South Asia[3]), floods (South East Asia[4], Africa[5]), heat waves and extended droughts (Europe[6], Asia[7]), while the glaciers in the Arctic melt at a record high and carbon dioxide levels overshoot the 400 ppm mark[8].

The World Resources Institute has identified 2018 as the year of 'climate extremes'[9] and has found significant gaps from governments in acting on the findings from IPCC Report and country level emission gap reports. It's further evident that the current adaptation-mitigation pathways identified by countries for reaching their emission reduction targets will be insufficient to stay below the global average temperature rise of 1.5 degree by 2030. The Chapter 3 on **Impacts of 1.5°C of Global Warming on Natural and Human Systems** in the IPCC Special Report 2018 goes further to state that,

*'**there is no single '1.5°C warmer world**. Impacts can vary strongly for different worlds characterized by a 1.5°C global warming. Important aspects to consider (besides the changes in global temperature) are the possible occurrence of an overshoot and its associated peak warming and duration, how stabilization of the increase in global surface temperature at 1.5°C could be achieved, how policies might be able to influence the resilience of human and natural systems, and the nature of regional and sub-regional risks. The implications of overshooting are large for risks to natural and human systems, especially if the temperature at peak warming is high, because some risks may be long lasting and irreversible, such as the loss of some ecosystems. In addition, for several types of risks, the rate of change may be most relevant, with potentially large risks occurring in the case of a rapid rise to overshooting temperatures, even if a decrease to 1.5°C may be achieved at the end of the 21st century or later. If overshoot is to be minimized, the remaining equivalent CO2 budget available for emissions has to be very small, which implies that large, immediate and unprecedented global efforts to mitigate GHGs are required. **The time frame for initiating major mitigation measures is essential in order to reach a 1.5°C (or even a***

1   https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/summary-for-policy-makers/
2   https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/summary-for-policy-makers/
3   https://www.downtoearth.org.in/dte-infographics/displace-by-disasters/
4   https://www.bworldonline.com/southeast-asian-cities-vulnerable-to-floods-higher-sea-levels-oecd/
5   https://reliefweb.int/map/mozambique/southern-africa-tropical-cyclones-and-floods-humanitarian-response-last-updated-0
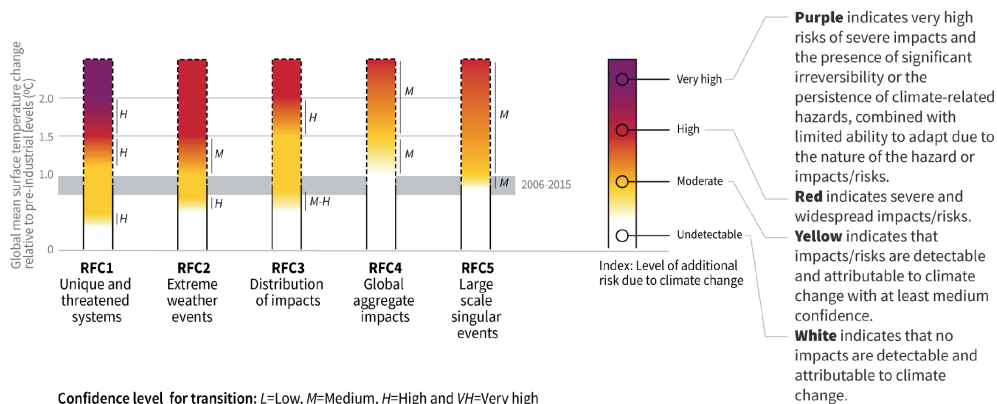6   https://www.dw.com/en/calls-for-farm-support-intensify-as-europe-struggles-with-heat-wave-drought/a-44902321
7   https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/north-korea-drought-worst-ever-food-aid-harvest-trump-kim-a8917581.html
8   https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-energy-climatechange-kemp/column-climate-change-targets-are-slipping-out-of-reach-idUKKCN1RT0P0
9   https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/12/2018-year-climate-extremes

Figure 1. Risks and/or impacts associated with Reasons for Concern

Confidence level for transition: *L*=Low, *M*=Medium, *H*=High and *VH*=Very high

The dependence of risks and/or impacts associated with the Reasons for Concern (RFCs) on the level of climate change, updated and adapted from WGII AR5 Ch 19, Figure 19.4 and highlighting the nature of this dependence between 0°C and 2°C warming above pre-industrial levels. As in the AR5, literature was used to make expert judgements to assess the levels of global warming at which levels of impact and/or risk are undetectable (white), moderate (yellow), high (red) or very high (purple). The colour scheme thus indicates the additional risks due to climate change. The transition from red to purple, introduced for the first time in AR4, is defined by very high risk of severe impacts and the presence of significant irreversibility, or persistence of climate-related hazards combined with a limited ability to adapt due to the nature of the hazard or impact. Comparison of the increase of risk across RFCs indicates the relative sensitivity of RFCs to increases in GMST. As was done previously, this assessment takes autonomous adaptation into account, as well as limits to adaptation (RFC 1, 3, 5) independently of development pathway. The rate and timing of impacts were taken into account in assessing RFC 1 and 5. The levels of risk illustrated reflect the judgements of the Ch 3 authors. **RFC1 Unique and threatened systems:** ecological and human systems that have restricted geographic ranges constrained by climate related conditions and have high endemism or other distinctive properties. Examples include coral reefs, the Arctic and its indigenous people, mountain glaciers and biodiversity hotspots. **RFC2 Extreme weather events:** risks/impacts to human health, livelihoods, assets and ecosystems from extreme weather events such as heatwaves, heavy rain, drought and associated wildfires, and coastal flooding. **RFC3 Distribution of impacts:** risks/impacts that disproportionately affect particular groups due to uneven distribution of physical climate change hazards, exposure or vulnerability. **RFC4 Global aggregate impacts:** global monetary damage, global scale degradation and loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. R**FC5 Large-scale singular events:** are relatively large, abrupt and sometimes irreversible changes in systems that are caused by global warming. Examples include disintegration of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. The grey bar represents the range of GMST for the most recent decade: 2006–2015.

source: IPCC SR Ch 3

2°C) global stabilization of climate warming."[10]

This calls for defining and disaggregating climate breakdown impacts at regional

10 *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. In Press.

and national levels, with the serious efforts and evidence that has been gathered for global climate change. Without knowing the changes at micro climate and local ecosystem levels, linking climate breakdown to frequent natural disasters or its impacts on communities, both sudden and slow onset, will be inconclusive and hence affect the urgency with which governments will act on the ongoing crisis, especially in the poorer countries of Global South.

Going South

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), an average of 25.3 million displacements have been brought on each year since 2008 by sudden-onset disasters alone. In 2016, 24.2 million new disaster displacements were brought on by sudden-onset natural hazards in 118 countries– outnumbering new displacements associated with conflict and violence by three to one. However, an independent study commissioned by Greenpeace Germany[11] found that "IDMC figures provide no information on whether internally displaced persons remain in the country where they experienced the natural disaster that first caused them to leave their homes. Global estimates regarding this group of internally displaced persons show it to be at least twice as large as the group of persons migrating abroad.

Nevertheless, internal migration finds surprisingly little attention in international

relations or in the debate on refugees." Similarly, there is no availability of gender disaggregated data yet. A recent paper from Sierra Club attempts to understand gender-based patterns and trends of displacement, migration as adaptation, and planned relocation through case studies discussing challenges and vulnerabilities in societies with existing gender division, especially "gender-based differences in the ownership, inheritance, and use of property may influence the ability to return and rebuild after displacement, or relocate.[12]
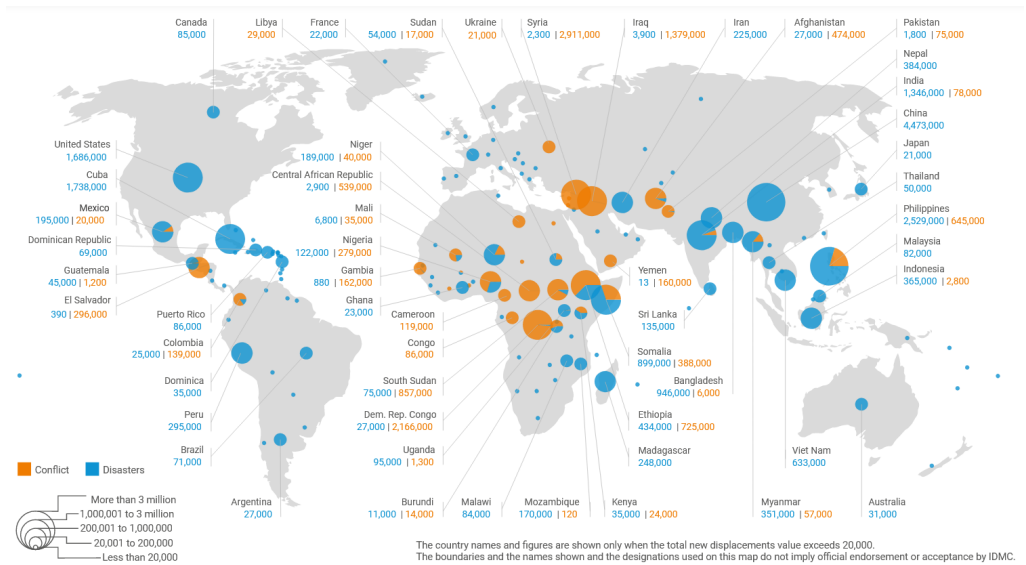
When disaster hits societies that are already grappling with issues of poverty, food insecurity and economic growth, rampant destruction of lives and livelihoods due to climate breakdown dramatically increases the vulnerabilities of those who were already at risk[13].

11 Climate Change, Migration and Displacement [Greenpeace Germany], May 2017 https://www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/20170524-greenpeace-studie-climate-change-migration-displacement-engl.pdf

12 Women on the Move in a Changing Climate: A discussion paper on gender, climate & mobility [Sierra Club], December 2018 https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2018/12/women-move-changing-climate
13 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jan/07/human-impact-has-pushed-earth-into-the-anthropocene-scientists-say

Figure 2. Global Report on Internal Displacement, IDMC 2018

The country names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000.
The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Climate change exposes women to an increased risk of violence, trafficking and conflict. In the last sixty years, at least 40 % of all intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources and the environment[14]. Increased economic insecurity related to climate change increases the susceptibility of people, including young women, to be recruited into combat. Gender-based violence is increasing in the countries of Asia-Pacific region, and there is a numbing acceptance to the everyday reality of violent solutions to disputes, within and among communities. For instance, women and girls in the Philippines were already vulnerable to sexual violence and trafficking due to high rates in poverty. But their displacement in the aftermath of super typhoon *Haiyan* has only made it worse, with estimates from the *United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) that 5,000 women were exposed to sexual violence in December 2013. Climate change is now posing an existential threat to humanity with increasing conflicts, resource-wars, human rights violations and insecurity.

Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries pushed for the inclusion of 'loss and damages' in the climate agreement in 2010 at Cancun. Since then like-minded developing countries like India and China have also been pressuring developed countries to formulate their commitments and take additional action around L&D through the principles of Equity, and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC). Actions should take into account the long-term effects of colonization, Industrial Revolution and

14   https://www.iisd.org/library/conflict-peacebuilding-role-natural-resources-and-environment

technological advancements that place people from Global South[15] at higher risk from climate change.

While the climate breakdown has escalated to its current global nature, it cannot be disputed that the origins have historic climate liability[16] (due to over exploitation of land and resources through colonialism and global capitalism) from countries in Europe and America, and hence the need for enhancing their existing efforts to not just paper promises, but consistent tangible commitments. Even in regards to climate migration/displacement, no country (except New Zealand who is considering an experimental climate refugee visa program for the Pacific) is even considering opening up their borders for the newly emerging class of 'climate refugees and migrants' from countries especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America[17].

The 'divide' between North and South, with developed countries disputing the validity and relevance of historic responsibilities or CBDRRC in current times, and developing nations demanding their share of climate justice, inadvertently has prevented any progressive action towards L&D at negotiations between the aforementioned parties. Similarly, parallel conversations on the ongoing displacement and migration owing to climate breakdown have failed to be recognized as a crisis and not entered mainstream consciousness as a need of the hour, despite the alarming state of the sinking islands in Pacific countries,

for example. Jakarta, Indonesia, is the fastest sinking city in the world (*refer case study in chapter 3*). The fact remains that the development overdrive in most affluent countries (including Japan, New Zealand and Australia) since the Industrial Revolution and the current development paradigm of 'booming' economies (like Middle East, India and China) are detrimental to the living ecosystems beyond borders and nations.

Claims of development aid and climate funds being sufficient to solve the climate crisis have been debunked by civil society, who have found that most of the finance is neither new nor additional. Resources mobilized come through as loans and investments channelled mostly as private or blended finance structures, which means that projects implemented are not principally intended to assist communities already impacted by climate change (adaptation). This is a gross violation of the trust placed by the most affected countries and communities in the multilateral negotiations like UNFCCC, where matters of financial commitments and support are supposed to uphold human rights, public participation, indigenous people's rights, just transition, gender, food security, ecosystem integrity and protection of biodiversity, and intergenerational equity.

It is pertinent to remember that corporate monopoly, the absence of finance and technology transfer and many other institutional weaknesses hinder any meaningful action towards helping countries affected by climate change to get on an equal footing with their developed country counterparts. Most developing countries spend substantial resources in addressing the consequences

15 https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/loss-and-damage-claims-in-climate-justice/article5411228.ece
16 https://www.climateliabilitynews.org/2018/12/30/2018-climate-liability/   https://worldat1c.org/sufferings-of-the-many-pay-for-the-luxuries-of-the-few-as-cop24-adopts-guidelines-for-the-6e5c7c88f369
17 https://worldat1c.org/sufferings-of-the-many-pay-for-the-luxuries-of-the-few-as-cop24-adopts-guidelines-for-the-6e5c7c88f369

rather the causes of climate change, and as such there would be very little resources left for them to undertake just and equitable transitions, as well as sustainable development to build their staggering economies on. Developing country governments are unable to provide adequate social protection like housing, education and healthcare as these are increasingly privatized, and end up desperate to raise resources through lopsided trade and investment deals, as well as through borrowing. This dependence on external financing comes with conditionalities that do further harm to people and the environment.

But progressive governance for combating the climate breakdown is now facing a stronger challenge with an ever-aggressive push for the global neoliberal agenda[18], that has shifted the political narrative into 'profits over people', without caring about the environment or climate change agenda.

18 https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/why-new-york-times-is-wrong-about-climate-change/

Authoritarianism and patriarchy in 2019

Conflict and climate change has an often neglected interlinkage in terms of deprivation of natural resources and living environment that pits communities against each other, despite having strong evidence that the world society was built on migration and exchange of ideas and culture. There is a rising intolerance for liberal progressive welfare for minorities, including women, especially in countries where there are rightist conservative governments in power. When present in global governance platforms of United Nations, the members of these countries are also known to block any negotiation efforts towards inclusion of human rights, gender equity, ecological and climate justice, and become the mouthpiece for polluting and extractive big businesses who profit from watered down climate and environment agreements[19].

For instance, rising islamophobia further escalates the ongoing crisis into full blown conflicts in some instances, and targeted violence at ethnic minorities who may or may not be of the same religious inclination[20]. In some cases, nexus of State-Industry-Security has been targeting and harassing activists and their frontline communities across negotiation spaces (for instance Keystone XL violating indigenous peoples' rights), threatening the very spirit on which the United Nations was built on. Despite the rise of ecosocialist and feminist movements in 2018 and 2019[21], the current surge in toxic macho-fascism and authoritarianism globally has been a threat to the rights of the minorities, marginalized and the environment. The recent years see an increasing number of deaths and violence towards environment and human right defenders, especially towards women

19 https://theecologist.org/2018/jun/01/corporate-conflicts-interest-eclipse-key-climate-negotiations

20 https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/dangerous-rise-of-populism
21 https://worldat1c.org/beyond-the-un-young-feminists-drive-climate-justice-action-7e6b74e85a2d

and LGBTQI community, free press, and even sexual violence in post-disaster/ displacement situation. This prevents realization of inclusive and progressive reforms that uphold the principles of human rights while trying to combat climate breakdown in an effective manner.

There is a fear towards phenomena like migration, reservation and representation of minorities in mainstream socio-political context, and this has eroded the current governance policies around issues of climate change. As of 2019, neither the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change nor the International Organization of Migration, among other UN bodies, have been able to resolve the apparent conflict of interest and lack of accountability among member states and the private sector, in such formal processes. This has severely fractured the multi-governance and diplomatic approaches that are crucial to tackling complex developmental issues of climate breakdown in a cohesive and cooperative manner. With no scope or space for international solidarity and collective action, the authoritarian regimes and their allies have ensured that their business as usual paradigm that places the vested interests of the global elites over the others continues to stay in place, despite the deadly and unpredictable weather and disaster patterns becoming our everyday reality.

CHAPTER 2: WEATHERING STORMS - GENDER AND SOCIETY IN CRISIS

The 'Others' – Structural and Institutional Oppression

Social exclusion based on class/caste/gender identities, politicizing 'others' and breeding hatred/conflicts

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bangladesh and India are often seen at the very top of the list of countries facing the most risks associated with climate change, and have also placed Nepal, Philippines, Afghanistan and Myanmar within the top 10 countries facing 'Extreme Risk'. Thus six of the ten countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are Asian nations. For these countries in the region, which is home to half of the world's extreme poor (at least 641 million people) there is very little capacity and means for coping with these new challenges. The diversity of the region – geographically, economically, politically and socially – means that the peoples' experiences of climate change are varied, yet their overall state of poverty amplifies their shared vulnerabilities. Looking at the recent Rohingya issue[22], it has become quite evident that countries are no longer willing to open their borders, within and between, to communities that fall outside the 'empathy' of majority population. This extends largely to religious, ethnic and sexual minorities as well as Stateless persons that include women, elderly and children.

In many Asian countries, migration has taken place, especially from rural to urban setups, in search of better employment and education. In the past few years, younger people, both men and women have also been emigrating to neighbouring countries that have better economic prospects, a phenomena seen in South East Asia (from Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia), South Asia (from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, to India and China) and a few countries of Central Asia (from Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, to Russia or Eastern Europe). These typically are low-skilled, informal sector workers seeking access to better pay to support their families back in their home country. Migrants from the global South to Europe and USA are much stringently screened and often deported without any real chance of settling in after the ardent task of migrating. High skilled professionals in medical and technology sectors face challenges to find jobs even with a degree from a university in the global North.[23] The recent issues around migration from Mexico[24] into USA, and the 2016 tensions[25] between Mediterranean and European countries over the influx of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, has sparked scrutiny over human rights violations like family
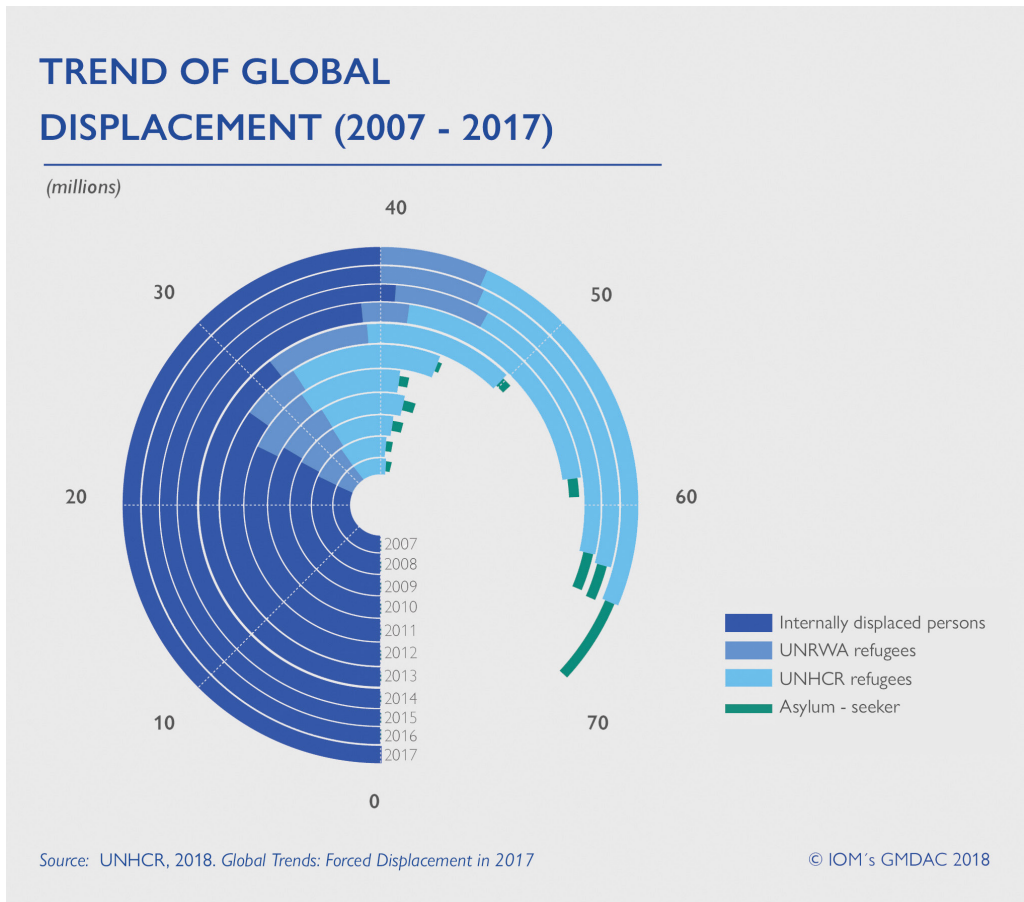
22   https://time.com/5442807/myanmar-bangladesh-rohingya-acountability-bill-richardson/

23   https://www.ilo.org/asia/areas/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm
24   https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html
25   https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2017/IEMed_MedYearbook2017_climate_change_Werz_hoffman.pdf

Figure 3. Defining displacements

TREND OF GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT (2007 - 2017)

(millions)

Legend:
- Internally displaced persons
- UNRWA refugees
- UNHCR refugees
- Asylum - seeker

Source: UNHCR, 2018. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017*

© IOM´s GMDAC 2018

separation and arbitrary detentions on political mainstage and being attributed to climate change.

Similarly, within larger countries like India, there exists internal migration and resettlement of rural and indigenous population to urban setups, where they are mostly recruited for construction, industry and farm labour. Women mostly seek and find employment as domestic help and soft-labour factories (like garment industry for instance) with additional burden of household work and negligent social security[26]. Most of such migrant workers, even within a country, often find themselves without means of self-identification, access to healthcare and sanitation, or reliable housing. In a weak economy, this makes them more vulnerable to being targeted by resident

26 https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/the-backlash-against-internal-migration/article26250756.ece

workers as outsiders and a threat to their means of livelihood.

Adding pressure to the steady rate of migration is the newly emergent phenomena of disaster and conflict-induced displacement in unprecedented numbers. Unlike "chain migration" that has captured the imagination of the masses as planned and "evil", this displacement is of helpless communities fleeing from uninhabitable living conditions to countries without imminent ecological or socio-political risks. Women in the Mekong region (especially Isan province of Thailand) and other poorer regions of South East Asia often resort to 'marriage migration' to Europe as a bid to secure their families futures against forced internal displacement and poverty; instead providing an opportunity for families to migrate to developed countries or affluent regions nearby. IOM estimates that '62 per cent of people living in situations of modern slavery are in the region, working in sectors including the sex industry, agriculture, construction, fishing and hospitality. Thirty-two per cent of the trafficking victims assisted by IOM worldwide are in Asia Pacific countries'. The region is also particularly prone to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, which particularly affect islands and urban centres in coastal and low-lying areas. 80 percent of sudden onset natural disaster-induced displacement worldwide occurs in this region, including displacement caused by earthquakes, typhoons, flooding and volcanic eruptions.

"Displacement often creates conditions that are conducive to gender-based violence and other violations of human rights, such as sexual harassment or physical abuse. For example, after 2008 Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, women faced "increased incidents of sexual and domestic violence, forced prostitution, and sex and labour trafficking in cyclone-affected areas." Challenges to safety and security persist outside of formal internal displacement camps; a 3.5-fold increase in the rate of gender-based violence was reported for women who were displaced following Hurricane Katrina (U.S.), mostly driven by violence inflicted by an intimate partner. In planned relocation processes, sexual harassment of women by authorities has also been reported." (Sierra Club, 2018)

Projects without safeguards

Social insecurity and lack of gender safeguards to promote democratic participation in projects/policies in natural resource management, environment and development

In most climate and environment projects that are implemented with the assistance of multilateral development banks, international financial institutions and bilateral agreements, the financial instruments reinforce debt structures and these resources exist mainly as loans

instead of grants[27]. With the increasing preference towards technological interventions, especially in climate mitigation projects, the additional fee for technology transfer, repair and maintenance are borne at additional costs to the project proponents, which in this case are the climate impacted/vulnerable countries. Private sector partnerships come at a high user fee and grievance mechanisms for such high-investment projects, especially if it involves land and resource allocation, can be lax and unapproachable to communities.

'False' climate solutions[28], such as REDD+ or mega-dams, as seen in the recent Lower Sesan 2 (LS2) dam, a hydropower project that began operating in 2017 on the Sesan River in Cambodia, "around ninety thousand villagers will be negatively impacted by the dam as fish populations disappear and water quality changes. The cultures and livelihoods of many communities depend on the health of these rivers. Cambodian communities rely heavily on fish from the Mekong and its tributaries as an essential source of food"[29]. The communities, especially the indigenous peoples, were left out of the decision-making processes since its inception. Until today, the dam project has not been called off due to massive investments from China and Thailand, while communities face risk even from military forces due to their refusal to give up their ancestral lands.

In the absence of accountable structures and accessible processes for communities to exercise their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and access to remedies for the social costs of displacement, we witness massive violation of people's right to live in a dignified, toxic-free, safe and healthy environment. Despite the presence of international agreements like the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), mechanisms that monitor human rights performance of governments such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and other platforms across multilateral governance processes, mechanisms that uphold the principles of equity and justice in field the implementation of climate development and environment projects are still amiss. In the current atmosphere of State surveillance[30], even fundamental civil rights like right to information are under attack, further distancing communities from accessing justice, even in supposedly 'democratic' countries like India. Without finding accessible and just systems to protect their rights, migration, relocation and displacement places them further down the economic and social processes of society, deepening the inequalities and increasing the risk of targeted violence towards the already marginalized groups.

27 https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/2017/11/11/little-money-in-sight-at-climate-summit
28 https://www.foeeurope.org/false-solutions
29 https://earthrights.org/what-we-do/mega-projects/lower-sesan-2-dam/
30 http://theconversation.com/how-governments-use-big-data-to-violate-human-rights-109537

Ecological collapse?

Dying environment and perils of migrants and marginalized

In the effort to restore communities to their socio-cultural default, there is failure to recognize that ecological restoration is key to their well-being[31]. For instance, agrarian and fisher people who are increasingly being displaced due to extreme weather situations, find themselves alienated in a concrete-urban system to which they are relocated. They often become informal wage workers in industries or farms and lose their sovereignty. Similarly, women in post-disaster rehabilitation set-ups often are neglected in land and assets ownership, that prevents them from achieving income security and instead reinforce patriarchal divide that make them dependents of men in the community, which increases their risk of being abused further[32].

Similar experiences of discrimination have been recorded in relief and humanitarian support due to existing social prejudices like religion and caste in culturally-complex countries, further highlighting the need to integrate considerations for post-disaster relief and rehabilitation planning for socio-economically oppressed and marginalized communities. As an example, in the post-flood relief and rehabilitation that took place after September 2018 in Kerala (India), the indigenous communities that were near the flooded dams in Thrissur, Wayanad and Idukki were not accounted for in the relief efforts[33]. Having been displaced already once during the construction of these structures, the communities now face further deprivation due to deforestation and 'development' projects, mechanization of labour and lack of opportunities within the State for economic upliftment. In some of these communities, the girls and women are further pushed into debt, precarious work and even trafficking, in the absence of accountable agencies that represent their interests with fair and informed decision making.

To reduce loss and damages merely to economic dimensions is a grave injustice in these instances[34]. Non-economic loss and damages (NELD) as identified by UNFCCC include human life, health, human mobility, territory, cultural heritage, biodiversity, ecosystem services, as well as indigenous and local knowledge, and other social capital[35]. These cannot be compensated in monetary or quantitative assessments, and are deeply connected to how communities co-exist in relation to the global transition, that in some instances puts them in even more vulnerable scenarios. In the case of small island nations in the Pacific or Maldives, and in countries of Africa, the climate breakdown poses existential threat with rapidly rising sea levels as well as extended drought spells that will force people to leave behind entire communities and countries, and plunge them into uncertain futures and unwelcoming borders.

31   Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss, Nature Climate Change [Cunsolo, Ashlee & Ellis, Neville] 2018, 8. 275-281. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0092-2
32   http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-BOOM-RIW-FPAR-Regional-Report.pdf
33   https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/how-caste-discrimination-during-and-after-kerala-floods-has-affected-dalits-adivasis-90804

34   https://thewire.in/environment/its-time-to-talk-about-the-mental-health-effects-of-climate-change
35   https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2013/tp/02.pdf

Figure 4. Summary of main types of non-economic losses, Technical Paper from UNFCCC Expert Group on Non-Economic Losses 2013

Type of non-economic loss	Description	Example of loss due to climate change and variability	Climate drivers	Approaches to valuation
Loss of life	Loss of life is a clear example of a non-economic loss as it is a violation of the right to life	The Russian heatwave in 2010 may have claimed 55,000 lives (World Bank, 2012). Torrential rainfall in December 2010 in Central and South America caused flooding and landslides in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Colombia and Panama which killed over 100 people (NOAA, 2010)	Direct losses from extreme weather events, indirect losses arising from climate-induced deterioration in health (see Health below for climate drivers of these)	Number of lives lost is a clear metric on its own, but it can be monetized using a value of a statistical life methods. However, such methods of monetization may not be suitable in the context of a global threat such as climate change
Health	Human health incorporates physical, mental and social well-being, and its non-economic value stems from its contribution to well-being	Epidemiological evidence has pointed to a widespread environmental cause for recent outbreaks of cholera, rather than a point source contamination. For example, cholera epidemics are associated with positive surface temperature anomalies in coastal and inland lake waters (McMichael et al., 2003)	Extreme air temperature, extreme weather events, floods and droughts, climatic effects on agriculture, and spread of infections disease vectors	Disability adjusted life-years are an established and widely used method of measuring health impacts in terms of healthy life lost. Health impacts tend not to be monetized, but it is possible
Human mobility	Displacement is the clearest case of non-economic loss in the continuum of human mobility, as non-economic items, such as security, dignity and agency, are impaired by displacement	Permanent relocation plans identified in IDMC and OCHA (2009) consider the forced displacement of the 2,000 inhabitants of the Tulun (Carteret) and 400 of the Takuu (Mortlock) islands in Papua New Guinea. Over 27,000 people were forced from their homes in Fiji by two flood disasters and the impact of Cyclone Evan in 2012. Cyclone Evan further displaced over 7,000 people in Samoa, where another 3,700 people were forced from their homes by floods (IDMC, 2013)	Extreme weather events, particularly hydrometeorological events, and slow onset events past a tipping point can result in displacement	The direct non-economic loss of displacement is intangible but the number of climate change-related displaced people can indicate the scale of the issue, while assessment of the risk of displacement can allow people to internally value potential loss and damage

"It should be recognized that there are ultimately also technological, biophysical or economic constraints to adaptation. If climate risks were severe, there may be cases where the protection of some natural or societal assets is no longer a realistic option. Prominent examples in the natural world include glaciers and coral reefs, which provide many ecosystem services but face clear limits to adaptation. Similarly, a small island nation may become inundated due to sea level rise and its population relocated. Even though the nation would persist, without its original geographical location the people of the nation would suffer a loss in terms of displacement, culture, belonging, history and sovereignty." (UNFCCC Expert Group on non-economic losses, 2013)

CHAPTER 3: CLIMATE MIGRANTS - UNKNOWN, UNHEARD

Environmental migration and climate induced displacement, amongst other human mobility issues, is a gendered phenomenon – which means that men, women and transgender are disproportionately impacted by the cause and consequences, in terms of access to services, security and justice. However, policy discourses and research around the same regard these as gender-neutral – failing to find interlinkages between migration, ecosystems and gender.

International law does not recognize climate refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 protocol (that makes it legally binding for UN member states to provide protection to asylum seekers), making them ineligible for any protection under national or international legal frameworks, thus making this category of migration unsafe for migrating women, children and other marginalized persons. Climate migrants often lack representation, residency rights or social entitlements and hence find themselves pushed into the category of illegal immigrants, with little or no effort made by the authorities understand their reasons for migration. In a country like India, for instance, where competition for jobs and resources is already very high, this issue is also repeatedly exploited for political gain and treating migrants with contempt[36].

To understand the situations that lead to migration, two case studies have been based on availability of reporting/literature, that focuses on internal displacement and migration as a result of environmental degradation and climate breakdown in Asia.
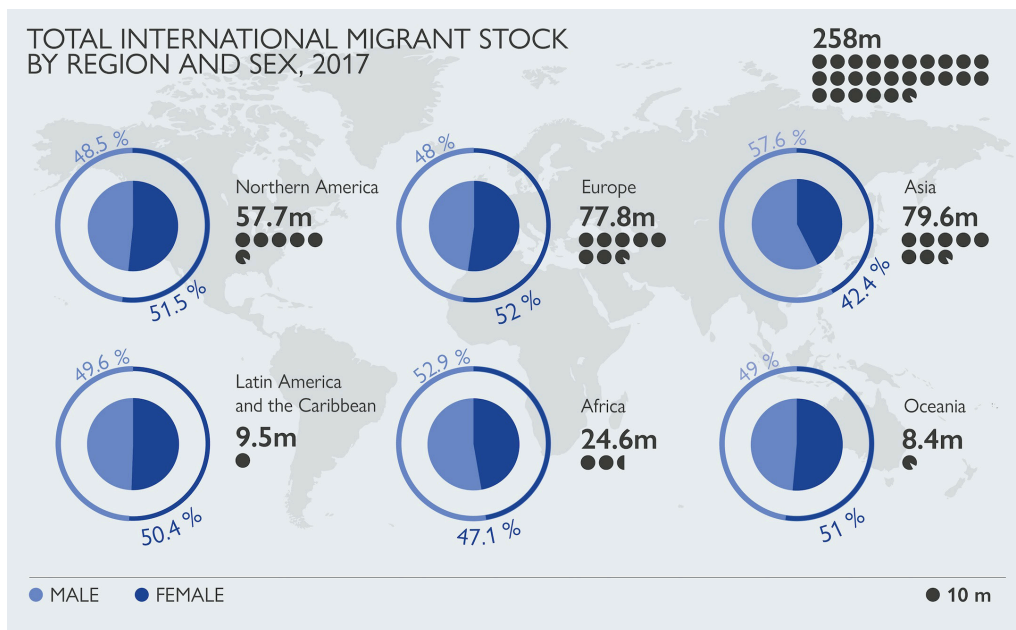
36 https://www.downtoearth.org.in/dte-infographics/displace-by-disasters/

India

While India might be home to refugees from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar as a result of decolonization, it has refused to sign and ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 protocol. Migrants without documentation that live in India after its independence in 1947 are neither recognized as citizens nor asylum seekers – and remain as Stateless. In recent times, the recurrent earthquakes and floods in Nepal, rising sea levels and coastal erosion in Bangladesh, and ethnic violence against communities in Sri Lanka and Myanmar have seen more and more families fleeing to India for work and resettlement through land and seas. Despite bilateral and regional cooperation treaties among South Asian countries, the issue of migration and climate change are yet to feature in mainstream political discussions or policy arrangements. In a large country like India, migration even within its States are largely problematic, and the surge in coastal storms and flooding has become a serious issue for governance and resource allocation.

Figure 5. Gender specific challenges for people on the move in changing climate, Sierra Club 2018

TOTAL INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK
BY REGION AND SEX, 2017

258m

48.5 % — Northern America **57.7m**
51.5 %

48 % — Europe **77.8m**
52 %

57.6 % — Asia **79.6m**
42.4 %

49.6 % — Latin America and the Caribbean **9.5m**
50.4 %

52.9 % — Africa **24.6m**
47.1 %

49 % — Oceania **8.4m**
51 %

● MALE ● FEMALE   ● 10 m

Safety and security	Psychosocial needs	Access to relief and other social services	Rights to own, inherit, or use land
Heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sex and labour trafficking, and other violations of human rights while on the move	Mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder while on the move	Single women heads of household may not be able to access relief and other services while displaced	Gender-based discrepancies in terms of access, ownership, inheritance, and use of property influence the ability to return and rebuild after displacement or during the relocation process

The case of Odisha State

When cyclone Phailin (2013) and the recent cyclone Fani (2019) hit the coastal state of Orissa, the state witnessed an unprecedented scale of migration of fishing communities that had otherwise been based there for decades. Total damage in Odisha in 2019 were estimated at ₹12,000 crores (US$1.74 billion), mostly in property damage. Due to the experience of the earlier cyclone, the government was able to move at least a million people each from Fani's projected path onto higher ground and into cyclone shelters, which is thought to have reduced the resultant death toll to 89[37].

Apart from the sudden onset of cyclonic storms, Odisha is also assailed by prolonged droughts in the river delta regions. Recently in the Mahanadi delta, the state government of Odisha is resettling 571 families due to severe coastal erosion in the Kendrapada district. Over the years many villages have lost their land to the sea[38].

Despite being one of the poorer states in India along with the issues of rapid urbanization without factoring the climate context, the population of Odisha have shown extraordinary resilience to the onset of climate change that has pillaged it. Indigenous communities and local farmers have been exploring local restoration of water bodies and traditional agriculture. However, these efforts are still insufficient and provide bare minimum for subsistence. Farmers in Odisha face the climate crisis due to extended dry spells

and are burdened by debts to provide relief from crop losses[39]. With extreme agrarian distress, the state witnessed a large number of farmer suicides in recent years[40], while unable to offer any long term rehabilitation or relief to its farming community.

A study[41] based on household survey and group discussions from a drought-prone region in Western Odisha examining the link between climate variability and migration from a historical perspective found that at a local scale it was very difficult to ascertain the role of climate change in migration. It points to the fact that climate-induced migration might not be a viable option for poor and vulnerable farmers who are already living in conditions of chronic poverty, and earnings from precarious work conditions with the move to bigger towns/cities do not help them break the cycle of poverty. Further research on climate migration needs to focus on how climate shocks impact household livelihood strategies, vulnerabilities and income profile for creating strategic interventions.

Similarly, fishing communities that have been relocated for safety are now faced with the challenges of finding employment and resettling in their new shelters – or to move further on to bigger cities in search of better opportunities. Most of them however, become casual labourers, while women and girls find work as low-paid domestic help. Issues around trafficking and sexual violence are being tracked

37   https://indiaclimatedialogue.net/2019/05/10/rebuilding-woes-in-the-wake-of-cyclone-fani/
38   https://indiaclimatedialogue.net/2019/01/09/mismanagement-can-worsen-odisha-extreme-rainfall-events/

39   https://indiaclimatedialogue.net/2019/03/13/farmers-push-back-desertification-in-odisha/
40   https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/22/special-articles/small-farmers%E2%80%99-suicide-odisha.html
41   https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312521661_Climate_change_drought_and_vulnerability_A_historical_narrative_approach_to_migration_from_Eastern_India

and monitored by a few non-government organizations, but it is hard to provide rescue or rehabilitation support for all. Of the approximated 2 million migrants from Odisha, over one-third are women and children who are illegally employed in hazardous work conditions in brick-kiln factories and other industries. Similarly, the indigenous youth that relocate to cities often get caught in local crime groups and face police brutality when in custody for suspected criminal activity[42]. There is a serious lack of coordinated efforts to understand this situation further and create independent justice systems for inter-State/transboundary issues such as this. Even documenting such cases are considered high-risk and human rights groups are without sufficient resources to provide aid or contribute to strategic

interventions for the government to act on.

The governments of Odisha and India lack a holistic perspective on post-disaster displacement and rehabilitation of communities. India in its current population boom cannot rely merely on local resilience and outdated bureaucratic projects to tackle the deep crisis of climate breakdown in such states. In fact, what it needs is decentralized planning and support to local authorities for effectively addressing the poverty-migration-disaster factors especially in climate vulnerable areas, and create plans to assist in mobility and rehabilitation that factor in their cultural and social realities, as much as economic incentives[43].

42   https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/brutalised-migrants-of-western-odisha/article5530859.ece

43   https://thewire.in/environment/what-can-odisha-do-better-to-prepare-for-disasters-after-cyclone-fani

Indonesia

With the construction sector boom winding down in 1990s, there was an upsurge of the feminization of migration, especially of domestic household helpers from Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Indonesia is an important source of low-skilled labour migrants, with about 6 million working abroad, particularly in more advanced Asian economies and in the Middle East[44]. Despite being a major emerging market economy, Indonesia faces steep inequality. A report by Oxfam in 2017 found Indonesia's four richest men having more

wealth than 100 million of the country's poorest people.

Within the country, rural–urban movement, both temporary and permanent, is significant, with western Java a common destination. However, with greater Jakarta expected to face multiple impacts of climate change in the years ahead, internal migration may shift to other urban areas less at risk.

With more than 10 million people currently living in Jakarta, it has recently also become the fastest sinking city in the world, thus becoming at high risk

44   http://bangkok.unesco.org/content/policy-briefs-internal-migration-southeast-asia

for high numbers of displacement and forced relocation. According to the World Economic Forum report, Jakarta has sunk by 13 feet (four meters) over the past three decades. North Jakarta has sunk by 2.5 meters in the last 10 years alone. If it continues at this rate, 95% of North Jakarta would sink by 2050.

Jakarta's emissions stem from deforestation and peatland mega fires and, to a lesser extent, the burning of fossil fuels for energy. Subsidence in Jakarta has become acute because most of its millions of residents end up extracting water through wells that tap shallow underground aquifers. These wells cater to the needs of one third of businesses and industries[45].

Baru, a settlement in the coastal area of north Jakarta, demonstrates the limitation of the government's role in terms of policy making and real action on environment and climate change-related migration. People who live in coastal areas where sea-level rise may induce flooding may be identified as potential environmental refugees or flood refugees. With respect to climate change issues, rather than focusing on greenhouse gas emissions as a consequence of uncontrolled transportation management in Jakarta, attention must be given to flooding, storm surges, and rises in sea levels which have created serious and potentially harmful hazards for marginalized people living in the city's coastal areas. Although climate change issues have become well-known, the Jakarta provincial government has

given them only minor attention in its Spatial Plan 2030[46].

Even in the recent election campaign, candidates pledged to increase the cultivation of palm oil – the major driver of deforestation in the country, while none mentioned how they planned to tackle climate change. Notable schemes financed by the multilateral climate funds include a US$150 million project to develop private sector geothermal energy and US$18 million for a community-led project to tackle forest degradation. Sea level rise threatens the 42 million people who live less than 10 meters above sea level in Indonesia.

Internal migrants from other parts of Indonesia constitute a significant population of major cities like Jakarta. In Indonesia, nearly 9.8 million individuals were estimated to be temporary internal migrants in 2010, more than the number of international migrants from Indonesia, which is estimated at 4.6 million. Despite the staggering numbers of internally displaced and migrating population, the government's interest in climate action is through large technology driven mitigation projects, including problematic geothermal and bioenergy carbon capture storage (BECCS), that might pose more threat to the fragile archipelagic nature of the islands. In Jakarta, there is no measure taken to work cohesively with other government departments and national government to prioritize and phase out displacement in a documented, planned and consistent method.

45 https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/sinking-cities-rising-seas-paper

46 https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/nts/climate-change-migration-and-human-security-in-southeast-asia/#.XP0BvY8ck2w

In Indonesia, women and girls are governed under strict Sharia ordinances (Islamic Law), that severely limits their access to safe relocation, mobility and livelihood opportunities. During the post-tsunami rehabilitation process in Aceh province in 2004, women were discriminated and excluded from the formal planning process for months altogether. In the temporary shelters where most of them stayed on for over year, report of domestic violence, rape and inadequate emergency care were reported by human rights groups.

"Aceh is a province with predominantly Muslim population and strong patriarchal culture where Shariah law is practiced. Women are represented by male family members in the public life, therefore at camps for internally displaced people (IDPs), women are not involved in management of the camps. There are concerns among women that Shariah law will be further reinforced. In the tsunami aftermath, women have not been afraid to carry on daily activities without wearing veils. Many women do not want to be forced to wear veil, or be subject to other Shariah restrictions such as not being allowed out after 6 pm unless accompanied by a male relative." (APWLD, 2005)[47]

More than a decade since the tsunami, not much has changed in Indonesia in terms of disaster risk response and protection of rights, as seen in the recent earthquake and tsunami at Sulawesi province in 2018[48], where the human rights situation is yet to be investigated. According to Human Rights Watch Indonesia Report 2019, the current regime also continues to use military for repressing dissent, carrying out extra judicial killings and targeting indigenous youth and environmental/land rights activists. Despite promises of addressing human rights violations since previous regimes, there has been a lack of will and efforts towards tackling these. Such lack of initiative and awareness will further cause breakdown of the social fabric, and exacerbate internal inequality within a society. In an atmosphere of increasing religious fundamentalism and intolerance towards sexual minorities, displacement can pose further threats to groups that face vulnerabilities in existing social system. The human rights violations faced by those who migrate internationally, as seen in the case of Tuti Tursilawati who was executed in Saudi Arabia in 2018, and 'blasphemy' laws to target communities within in the current regime call for the need for protection of these groups[49].

47   http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/tsunami_report_oct2005.pdf

48   https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/earthquake-and-tsunami-a-deadly-blow-indonesias-human-rights-movement/
49   https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/indonesia

CHAPTER 4: WHERE DO WE GO NOW?

Ways forward through research, activism and policy measures

It is evident that there is a need for more understanding and empathetic research on the issues of migration and displacement, not restricted to academic discourses but actionable policy outcomes as well. When tackling the issues and complexities of displacement and migration, some of the key guiding questions could be:

• What were the main drivers of the decision to relocate? Were any of those directly linked to environment, natural resources and security, additional to economic considerations?

• Why was the current location chosen? What were the advantages that were perceived by the migrants in order to make this choice? Are there any ongoing support initiatives/policies/agencies that facilitate this (government or non-government)?

• What are the existing structural barriers (fundamentalism, militarism, neoliberalism/capitalism) faced by women and sexual minorities in both locations?

• Are there ongoing initiatives by activists and civil society to provide support for climate change linked impacts/migration/livelihoods? Do they support these migrants or have they been accessible for such groups?

• What are the social justice institutions that are present in these locations for gender based violence/discrimination and other grievances?

• What is the current political scenario in these locations? (especially with regard to attitude on social equity, migrants and religious tolerance)

Without reshaping traditional narratives and giving communities a right to voice their realities (without placing the burden of proof of climate change), any envisioning of progressive reforms or approaches may fall short of providing real relief to those on the frontlines of a climate breakdown[50]. Initiatives like feminist participatory action research that are slowly being adopted by women's groups in Asia-Pacific[51] and Africa, is one of the innovative and radical forms of reclaiming research for social and climate justice.

50   https://www.climatechangenews.com/2017/01/09/south-asias-women-suffer-as-climate-migration-rises/
51   https://apwld.org/women-warming-up/

Women's rights are human rights

Working with HRTBs and climate litigation for bringing gender impacts on the frontline

Since 2018, the Human Rights Treaty Bodies (HRTB), including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers (CMW) and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), have raised climate change as a serious issue in their Committee issuing Concluding Observations (COBs), which make recommendations on a country's compliance with the relevant treaty[52]. As of 2019, some of the crucial areas that have been highlighted in COBs presented to countries upon their review are the following:

- duty for states to reduce emissions;

- limit and establish safeguards (including extraterritorial obligations) against fossil fuel use;

- regulate private sector operations;

- slow down deforestation and promote agroecology;

- access to information and justice, including full and meaningful participation of communities at risk during policy/program formulation (procedural rights);

- integrate human mobility-related considerations into disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and plans;

- protection of human rights and groups in vulnerable situations; and

- international and financial cooperation.

In 2018, CEDAW also adopted General Recommendation 37 on "Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change" (GR37). This recommendation identifies the wide range of obligations of countries under the treaty in relation to climate change and disaster risk reduction and management.

The HRTBs through its independent experts provide three functions to civil society and communities: the individual communications procedure (a quasi-judicial complaint procedure); general recommendations and thematic initiatives; and the State reporting procedure (where State submits its compliance report to the HRTB which is reviewed and COB provided, along with a dialogue held to discuss possible ways forward). While the HRTBs are located in Geneva mostly, access to information around the developments that take place here are disseminated extensively by civil society policy and advocacy groups from Global North. Partnering with grassroots and community-based organizations as well as activists from global South, these groups are then able to make regular submissions, request informal meetings with the

52   https://www.ciel.org/reports/states-human-rights-obligations-context-climate-change/

experts to raise concerns/complaints, and create media opportunities to bring these processes to mainstream.

In the current trend of governments (like the USA and Saudi Arabia) dismissing such procedures as 'inefficient' or 'irrelevant' to their country's cultural and political contexts, the HRTB functions are being severed in terms of accessing decision makers, funding for its operations and reaching out to grassroots for effective and immediate remediation. It is also limited in its powers to ensure compliance towards various policy frameworks and guiding principles that are mostly voluntary obligations of countries when it comes to climate change and environment.

Despite these limitations, HRTBs work closely with civil society allies in the global North and the experts are open to seeking innovative ways to tackle the issue of human rights violations as a direct impact of climate breakdown. One of the emergent areas where there have been positive developments is climate litigation, that has taken such policy platforms one step ahead into ensuring accountability and compliance from developed country governments. In 2018 , there was a wave of climate liability cases, among them the Urgenda Foundation together with 900 citizens suing and winning against the government of Netherlands to take more measures against climate change; New York City suing five oil majors; France facing a potential lawsuit for failing climate targets; the Philippines Human Rights Commission's investigation for potential human rights violations by 47 fossil fuel companies for their role in climate change (despite its own government's notorious record on human rights violation) and the European Parliament ordering a probe into ExxonMobil's climate misinformation campaign. These litigations and investigations are taking on the biggest carbon polluters – governments and corporations – and as of 2019, the Pacific island nations led by Vanuatu are considering a climate liability lawsuit against carbon majors[53].

These lawsuits have opened up a huge avenue for seeking repair and compensation, and could become a potential tool for communities to bring their violations up for judicial enquiry. There is scope for civil society and action groups from global North to provide support to the grassroots, especially marginalized groups, to be represented under the rule of law and access justice in the judicial system of the carbon majors itself, since the judicial system in the global South still does not hold the power to bring these transnational corporations from developed countries to court. Similarly, in countries like India and Philippines where there is an attack on democratic institutions, the integrity of legal mechanisms and human rights obligations is itself unstable. By actively reaching out to activists, frontline communities and grassroots organizations (especially women, LGBTQI community and indigenous peoples) and representing them in international tribunal, quasi-judicial and judiciary of global North, a sense of justice and accountability from the countries where these systems are still upheld may be invoked.

53   https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/mar/20/can-climate-litigation-save-the-world

Strike for solidarity and climate justice

Fridays for Future, i.e. the school strikes for climate that started in Europe, is quickly evolving into an international movement of youth and students with its massive protests and demonstrations for countries to take action against climate breakdown and save the futures of children. Similarly, there was an increasing number of demonstrations by the autonomous group Extinction Rebellion in the United Kingdom to highlight the need for governments to 'tell the truth' and take action on climate change. Sunrise Movement in the USA, and the resultant Green New Deal[54] is gaining traction among youth, and holds a promising way to reclaim power from the fossil fuel lobbies. These direct action strategies are gaining momentum, with millions mobilized on ground to call out government inaction and show solidarity to those who stand against polluters in their home countries. These movements are however yet to act together with the communities and movements of the global South and might in fact take away the focus of climate 'momentum' only for the futures of the rich and the developed countries.

In authoritarian regimes, especially in Asia and Africa, direct action has been curbed and curtailed by surveillance, intimidation, forced disappearances, imprisonment and killings, by police and the military in some cases. Despite this, protestors are on the ground (as seen in recent massive protests in Sudan, Hong Kong and India) and face heavy backlash from their governments. To be able to strike for survival and peace, to rebuild their lives from years of

conflicts and corruption, and to take back power from divisive forces, is no less than a matter of life and death. In countries where democratic rights to dissent still exist and where citizens are striking, there needs to be united demand for action and accountability from all governments not limited to those within their borders, but for those who are more vastly vulnerable and facing the consequences of historic realities of climate change without holding the responsibility of causing it.

There has been calls for global women's strike[55] and farmers protests in recent past, where their demands have been access to decent work, living wage and the right to land, to name a few. Despite that, anti-fracking and anti-coal groups have been clashing with workers' union and seen as a threat to their income security. Larger and intersectional global coalitions are yet to come together and understand the collective need for re-shaping the economy and political system that doesn't place most of the world's population in a precarious situation. The dire need of today is the creation of a global manifesto of demands led by civil society and peoples' movements, which contains a call for a systemic change and redistribution of access to resources. Without a global call for phasing out fossil fuels, opening borders and demilitarization of governments; and without extending international solidarity and collective demands for everyone's future, our climate justice movements may fail to deliver its promises to the poorest and the marginalized among us[56].

54   https://grist.org/article/the-green-new-deal-may-be-falling-short-on-its-environmental-justice-promise/

55   https://apwld.org/press-release-labour-day-feminist-groups-call-for-a-womens-strike/
56   https://www.peoplesdemands.org/

Progressive governance

Policy frameworks and platforms that address various facets of climate change – adaptation, mitigation, building resilience, transitioning to a low carbon pathway – have been in a deadlock since the USA pulled out of the Paris Agreement and more countries like Brazil and Indonesia are threatening to do the same. Despite the presence of international funding for environment and climate change, not enough is actually benefiting the grassroots level, and affected communities are still struggling to access funds directly for rehabilitation, and hardly any for reparation.

Since 2013 and onwards, the Warsaw International Mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Global Compact on Migration, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) to name a few, have all recognized the human rights violations[57] as a result of climate change and the 'loss and damages' (L&D) that countries- especially small islands and least developed- face as a result of the ongoing impacts. These policy platforms have encouraged governments, mainly those with a historic responsibility and high emission economies to collectively take action in the form of financial, technological and crisis support to the countries severely affected by climate disasters. As of 2019, no country is ready to recognize the need for such a 'mechanism'[58] that facilitates response to loss and damages, or has committed to any additional resource beyond those that have already been pledged as climate financing. Private sector has even tried to capitalize on this situation through public-private partnerships for climate insurance, which places the burden of proof and premiums on the affected countries, making it unaffordable and inaccessible to the poor[59].

The call for progressive measures like climate damages tax, carbon taxes for international aviation and maritime transport, and contingency finance, has been pushed by various policy groups during the last few years[60]. These groups further raise the need for investment in commons in order to have positive redistributional and climate impacts. To support such transitions recognizing the need for a global tax body that can end tax evasion especially from transnational corporations and wealthy individuals is pertinent. Other innovative sources include redirection of military budgets, taxes on arms trade and redistributive taxes that can even support social wages and gender equitable outcomes[61].

Progressive policy measures to ensure energy democracy and food sovereignty, and dismantling trade rules that prevent climate action is also unaddressed in most policy spaces. Free trade agreements and their problematic Investor State Dispute Settlement clauses, severely disrupt the sovereignty of democratic institutions of the country in the interests of environment and social protection. Tackling the issue

57   https://www.ciel.org/news/new-report-shows-un-human-rights-bodies-increasingly-concerned-climate-change-2018/
58   http://news.trust.org/item/20190409165724-8k0i9/

59   Climate and Gender Justice [Julie Ann Richards], 2018, ANALYSEN No. 51, 1st edition, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, ISSN 2194-2951
60   https://ke.boell.org/sites/default/files/carbon_majors_funding_loss_and_damage_kommentierbar.pdf
61   https://www.womenforwater.org/uploads/7/7/5/1/77516286/report_expert_group_challenges_and_opportunities_in_achieveing_gender_equality_and_the_empowerment_of_rural_women_and_girls_un_women_and_ifad_sept_2017.pdf

of displacement and migration cannot be done when opposing commercial interests place a huge economic burden on governments and prevent them from allocating resources equitably.

Similarly, regulation of corporates and polluting industries as public sector is crucial to ensure that countries can limit their emissions and enable just and equitable transitions[62]. Currently corporate capture and extensive industrialization/overproduction, especially for farming and forestry, has resulted in land grabbing and resource hoarding, internally displacing communities and denying them their right to livelihood and life. Public lands that are let out for commercial development that benefits only a few and guarantees minimum jobs must be seen as detrimental to the interests of the people.

To not paint things dismally in the name of giving hope is to foolishly let the ongoing climate breakdown take millions of lives and drive most species towards extinction[63]. Despite years of engaging governments and other stakeholders who downplay the climate crises, and despite evidence that points to big extractives (coal, gas, oil) being the major cause of triggering climate breakdown, the climate change accord (Paris Agreement and its Katowice work package) fails to deliver the ambition[64] that would prevent destruction of ecological systems.

While truly democratic governments are becoming a rarity in the current world order, the power to shift the present day neoliberal paradigm might lie with local self-governments and decentralized institutions that are enabled with financing and expertise to tackle issues around climate breakdown.

62 http://www.frauensolidaritaet.org/images/doku/fsz143lappinlamubol.pdf

63 https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/natures-dangerous-decline-unprecedented-species-extinction-rates
64 http://womengenderclimate.org/peoples-voices-and-urgent-solutions-dismissed-at-cop24-in-katowice/

"The dire need of today is the creation of a global manifesto of demands led by civil society and peoples' movements, which contains a call for a systemic change and redistribution of access to resources"

SHRADHA SHREEJAYA