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Policy Brief

**Inclusion, Collaboration, Action:
Addressing Climate-induced Migration**


SEEK


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Inclusion, Collaboration, Action: Addressing Climate-induced Migration

Executive Summary

- *Climate-induced migration has caused the displacement of millions and is estimated to continue growing in severity as the years pass*
- *International governance at this time does not specifically converse or focus on policies targeting climate-induced migration*
- *Introducing a financing mechanism for loss and damage, prioritizing conversations on climate migration at international conferences, and strengthening community-based adaptation are three measures to create more effective policies addressing climate-induced migration*

What is the issue?

The increase in climate-induced disasters and crises such as rising sea levels, erosion, and severe weather conditions has led to an increase in migration globally.

- In 2001 an estimated 25 million people were currently classified as environmental refugees ([Brown 2008, 11](#)).
- In 2005 it was estimated that by 2010 the number of environmental refugees would increase to 50 million ([Brown 2008, 11](#)).
- According to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Displacement Report, in 2020 disasters caused the internal relocation of 30.7 million people ([IFRC 2021, 4](#)).
- Per the report, 98% of those displaced were threatened by weather and climate hazards ([IFRC 2021, 6](#)).

These figures represent the loss of ancestral homelands and livelihoods.

What can policy do to fix this?

To properly address climate migration, policies need to decrease the severity of climate change and thus the future volume of climate migration, while also promoting adaptation, mitigation and loss, and damage. SEEK accordingly has three policy suggestions: the introduction of loss and damage financing, prioritization of conversations on climate migration, and community-based adaptation.

Loss and Damage Financing

Loss and damage is the acknowledgment that there are irreversible damages from climate change, historically at the hand of developed nations, requiring attention and compensation ([UNFCCC 2014](#)). This is linked to climate migration, as many of these irreversible damages have already caused and will continue to cause displacement, typically in countries with low historical and current emission levels. COP26 established the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage to discuss whether L&D financing should be introduced ([UNFCCC 2021, 8](#)), however, the Dialogue's first session saw little progress with disagreement mainly between developed and developing nations on the need for a financing mechanism.

Establishing an L&D specific mechanism will grant countries feeling the disproportionate impacts of climate change greater clarity and accessibility of L&D financing. Furthermore, a sole financing mechanism acts as a gesture of accountability for the historical responsibility developed nations hold regarding climate change and climate-induced migration.

Prioritize Conversations on Climate Migration

Per the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Displacement Report, climate-induced migration is a problem already impacting millions. Consequentially, climate-induced migration should be its own agenda item at COP27. Furthermore, the only international document concerning climate migration is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Though the framework lays out seven goals related to climate-induced migration, addressing issues such as resilience and reducing economic loss, the framework is essentially a list of political goals lacking tangible protection or enforcement ([UNDRR 2015](#)). In light of the Sendai Framework's upcoming midterm review, COP27 should devote conversations to expanding the framework to address international climate displacement and legal protection for displaced individuals. Furthermore, such conversations should be better led by the voices of displaced individuals and community activists to create more meaningful engagement of climate-affected communities in decision-making.

Community-Based Adaptation

Those impacted by climate change should drive the conversation surrounding policies. At COP27 conversations around financing and project proposals are typically driven by developed nations. Greater influence should be given to developing nations in the conversations surrounding adaptation and mitigation. Specifically, more policies focusing on capacity building driven by communities is needed via better stakeholder engagement beginning at COP27 discussions and influencing on the ground dynamics with projects that better address social and economic consequences of climate migration.

Conclusion

SEEK Research Network worked alongside prominent members in affected communities to draft these three recommendations. SEEK implores officials attending COP27 to implement all three solutions in order to curb the harmful effects of climate migration. Climate migration is growing in severity, jeopardizing the safety and livelihoods of communities globally. The three identified solutions of loss and damage financing, the prioritization of climate migration conversations, and strengthening community based adaptation will create more resilient communities in the face of climate change.

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- Policy Paper: [COP 26 Policy Analysis: Are World Leaders Doing Enough for Climate Migration?](#)
- [Policy Pointers: BONN Climate Change Conference](#)
- Video Series: [My Climate Stories](#)
- Interview Series: [Climate Talks](#)

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