

# Generating Political Commitment to Address Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change on the Regional and National Level

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Experiences from the Caribbean and Pacific Regions and the Horn of Africa

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## ABSTRACT

There is increasing recognition in many regions and countries across the globe that human mobility in the context of climate change (HMCCC) needs to be integrated into a variety of facets of development policies and frameworks. This requires action and collaboration on different levels. This paper showcases different initiatives in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Horn of Africa region to address climate-related human mobility. The examples show how determined actors and sustained collaboration on the national and regional level are instrumental in pushing the HMCCC agenda and improving its governance. In future, there will be a need to further strengthen the smooth interplay between committed national actors that are willing to explore new approaches and regional organisations that provide a platform for exchanging ideas and bringing good practices to scale.

## INTRODUCTION

Figures on disaster displacement reported annually by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)<sup>1</sup> as well as modelled projections of future climate-related internal migration published by the World Bank<sup>2</sup> clearly show that HMCCC is an issue that requires increased political attention and commitment on different levels of government. Even under best-case scenarios climate change will result in human mobility on a scale that needs to be managed in a responsible and comprehensive manner. As defined by the Cancun Adaptation Framework<sup>3</sup> human mobility here is understood as (i) forced displacement, (ii) migration, and (iii) planned relocation. Policy development and implementation need to enable communities to adapt and stay in place wherever viable. They should support mobility for people who need to move out of harm's way and ensure that both, areas of origin and receiving areas, are adequately prepared to deal with the resulting demographic changes.

Backed by global agreements and international processes such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)<sup>4</sup>, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with its Task Force on Displacement<sup>5</sup>, and the implementation of the Agenda for the Protection

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<sup>1</sup> IDMC (2020): Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020. (<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2020/>).

<sup>2</sup> Rigaud, K. K., de Sherbinin, A., Jones, B., Bergmann, J., Clement, V., Ober, K., Schewe, J., Adamo, S., McCusker, B., Heuser, S. & Midgley, A. (2018). Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration. Washington, DC: World Bank. (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461>).

<sup>3</sup> UNFCCC (2011): Report of the Conference of the Parties to its Sixteenth Session, Held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010. Decision 1/CP.16, Para 14(f). (<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>).

<sup>4</sup> UN (2018): Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195). ([https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195)).

<sup>5</sup> For further information see: <https://unfccc.int/wim-excom/sub-groups/TFD>.

of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change<sup>6</sup> through the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), regional and national authorities and agencies need to integrate HMCCC into all relevant facets of policy development and implementation.

Successfully addressing climate-related human mobility requires sustained political commitment as well as adequate capacities and resources on different levels. This paper builds on examples from three regions (Pacific, Caribbean, Horn of Africa) to examine how regional policy frameworks and migration protocols can support the improved management of HMCCC.<sup>7</sup> It explores how regional approaches can generate political commitment at the national level and looks deeper into the challenges of aligning national and regional priorities. The paper furthermore addresses some of the capacities that need to be built and provides strategies for securing adequate resources to ensure that HMCCC can be managed adequately.

The examples outlined here show that there is no blueprint for how to achieve progress in addressing climate-related human mobility. Instead, depending on the regional context a specific combination of national actors that are willing to blaze the trail and try new approaches and regional organisations that provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and the development of joint policies is needed. Despite the regionalised approaches, similar responses have been identified in the covered regions. In all three regions, actors recognise the value of inter-institutional cooperation and cross-sectoral exchange through dedicated working groups on disaster displacement and climate-induced migration. In addition, in two of the regions, countries are implementing or working on regional solutions to facilitate cross-border movements in times of disasters.

## REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND NATIONAL RELOCATION POLICIES IN THE PACIFIC

### Regional policy responses to climate change, disasters and human mobility

The Pacific Island Region consists of 14 independent countries and 8 territories, connected through an ocean which covers a third of the globe. The geographical location of many of its islands and atolls results in high degrees of vulnerabilities to climate change, including the impacts of sea level rise and inundation in coastal areas and low-lying atolls. The large distances between islands, their limited size as well as comparatively small populations make regional approaches an important response strategy of governments to these challenges. Regional platforms and frameworks connect the countries to a “sea of islands”<sup>8</sup>, putting an emphasis on the interconnectedness of the “Blue Pacific Continent”<sup>9</sup> instead of reproducing the belittling view of tiny and isolated islands with little mobility.

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<sup>6</sup> The Nansen Initiative (2015): Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change. ([https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN\\_Protection\\_Agenda\\_Volume\\_I\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN_Protection_Agenda_Volume_I_low_res.pdf)).

<sup>7</sup> The examples are linked to the Global Programme Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (GP HMCCC) implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Further information is available here: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/67177.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Hau’ofa, E. (1993): Our Sea of Islands. In: Waddell, E., Naidu, V. & Hau’ofa, E. (eds.): A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands: pp. 2–16. Suva: School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific in association with Beake House.

<sup>9</sup> PIF (2020): The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. (<https://www.forumsec.org/pacific-regionalism/>).



Figure 1: Outrigger boat. © Felix Ries, GIZ

An important tool for improving cooperation are regional frameworks which guide and align political priorities and provide a structure for interventions of development partners to avoid duplication and the inefficient use of funds. However, regional frameworks can only be successful if they reflect the national priorities of the participating countries, as geographies and political stances differ in each nation. In 18 of 22 Pacific Island countries and territories more than 90 per cent of the population lives within 5 kilometres off the coastline and has very limited territory to move or expand settlements. Countries like Papua New Guinea

and Fiji with bigger and higher elevated territories might pursue different approaches to deal with slow-onset events than countries at risk of losing their entire territory. Finding common ground and a framework to account for the national differences remains a challenge for regional integration. However, encouraging practices of regional cooperation exist, as will be shown with the following examples. At the same time, it is essential to acknowledge that regional frameworks cannot replace national policies. The latter are needed for contextualised and adequate implementation.

The Pacific Island Forum (PIF) is a regional organisation created in 1971. Its work is guided by the vision that all “Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives”.<sup>10</sup> The organisation fosters cooperation between governments and collaboration of those governments with international agencies. In the past, climate change and natural disasters were treated in silos via separate strategies and by different actors. To harmonize these issues, PIF member states and regional actors developed the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), which addresses climate change and disaster risk management in an integrated manner.<sup>11</sup> Putting a low-carbon, resilient development at its centre, the FRDP “advocates for the adoption of integrated approaches [...] for coping with and managing climate change and disaster risks, in order to make more efficient use of resources, to rationalise multiple sources of funding [...] and for more effective mainstreaming of risks into development planning and budgets”.<sup>12</sup> It does not only address PIF member states’ governments, but also other stakeholders including donors.

The FRDP calls for action to integrate human mobility aspects into national policies and actions, addressing not only disaster-related displacement but also relocation and labour migration policies. It requests improved support for the protection of people at risk of climate-related displacements as well as the development of national strategies on climate change and disaster-related relocation.<sup>13</sup>

The implementation of the FRDP is supported by the Pacific Resilience Partnership and its Technical Working Groups (TWG). The TWG “Human Mobility (Migration, Displacement and Relocation) in the Context of Increasing Climate and Disaster Risk” was established in 2019 and brings together regional organisations, governments, development partners and civil society organisations working on the respective topic. It is recognized as an important forum for exchange on new research findings, initiatives and opportunities for cooperation and serves as an expert platform.<sup>14</sup> The TWG is also a body for joint engagement with international processes. It was, for instance, instrumental in preparing a dialogue with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. The TWG also conducted a mapping of ongoing and planned

<sup>10</sup> PIF (2020): The Pacific Island Forum. (<https://www.forumsec.org/who-we-are-pacific-islands-forum/>).

<sup>11</sup> Pacific Community et al. (2016): Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017-2031. (<https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Framework-for-Resilient-Development-in-the-Pacific-2016.pdf>).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 15, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Technical Working Groups of the Pacific Resilience Partnership (<http://www.resilientpacific.org/technical-working-groups/>).

activities and projects on HMCCC to enable better targeted programming and creating synergies.

While regional frameworks can provide strategic guidance, they depend on implementation at the national level. Good examples include Vanuatu's National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement<sup>15</sup> and Fiji's systematic approach to deal with climate-induced relocations. The latter is described in more detail in the next section to provide a specific case of national policy implementation.

### Approaching planned and voluntary relocation at the national level – the example of Fiji

Due to its susceptibility to climate change-related hazards like sea level rise, flooding and tropical cyclones the Republic of Fiji is currently reviewing the permanent relocation of infrastructure and whole communities. According to assessments by the Government of Fiji more than 80 villages might require relocation.<sup>16</sup>

The village of Narikoso is one of the pioneers in climate change and disaster-related relocations in Fiji. According to the villagers, the shoreline has receded by 15 meters over the last decades and high tides have substantially damaged several houses.<sup>17</sup> In 2011, a first attempt for relocation was started. With no procedures and little experience with relocations available at the time, this first attempt led to negative side-effects. For instance, mangroves were destroyed in the process of preparing the relocation site and the participation of villagers in the process was considered inadequate. In view of these consequences, the Government of Fiji adjusted its approach and decided to start with the relocation of the most threatened houses to higher grounds but in close proximity to the village.<sup>18</sup> Learning from this and other experiences, the Government of Fiji adopted Planned Relocations Guidelines to ensure that future relocations will follow the principles of a human-centred, livelihood-based and human rights-based approach.<sup>19</sup> Relocations are considered an option of last resort, when all other adaptation options “are exhausted and only with the full, free, and informed consent and cooperation of the communities at risk experiencing the process of relocation.”<sup>20</sup>

While Planned Relocation Guidelines are an important milestone to ensure better relocation processes, other challenges still need to be solved. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) describing the required steps and responsibilities in more detail as well as serving as a framework for gathering all relevant data to avoid overlooking potential negative impacts – e. g. on gender dynamics – need to be developed. With support from international donors like Germany and New Zealand the Government of Fiji is currently elaborating SOPs.



Figure 2: Tukoraki – a relocated Fijian village. © Aaron March, GIZ

Relocations are costly – and as climate change is caused by global greenhouse gas emissions the villagers justifiably expect external assistance. In response to this demand, the Government of Fiji has set-up the

<sup>15</sup> Government of Vanuatu (2018): National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement (<https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/vanuatu-national-policy-climate-change-and-disaster-induced-displacement-2018>).

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Fiji (2014): Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Suva. (<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/fjinc2.pdf>).

<sup>17</sup> Barnett, J. & McMichael, C. (2018): The effects of Climate Change on the Geography and Timing of Human Mobility. In: Population and Environment 39: pp. 339–356. (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11111-018-0295-5>).

<sup>18</sup> Anisi, A. (2020): Addressing Challenges in Climate Change Adaptation: Learning from the Narikoso Community Relocation in Fiji. Policy Brief No. 84. Toda Peace Institute. ([https://toda.org/assets/files/resources/policy-briefs/t-pb-84\\_anna-anisi.pdf](https://toda.org/assets/files/resources/policy-briefs/t-pb-84_anna-anisi.pdf)).

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Economy, Republic of Fiji (2018): Planned Relocation Guidelines. A Framework to Undertake Climate Change Related Relocations. (<https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Planned-Relocation-Guideline-Fiji-2018.pdf>).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.5.

Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples Trust Fund as an innovative mechanism to mobilize funds for relocations.<sup>21</sup> The trust fund will receive domestic funding through measures such as an environmental levy on plastic bags. However, contributions from international donors are still needed and expected. By pledging a contribution of two million New Zealand dollars, the Government of New Zealand was the first donor to underline the importance of this financing mechanism in 2020.

To generate commitment by the international community and promote its actions in addressing the effects of climate change, the Government of Fiji makes use of international forums. For instance, it used the convening power and publicity of the UNFCCC Conferences of Parties (COPs) to launch its Planned Relocation Guidelines (2017) and the Displacement Guidelines (2019). Furthermore, the government announced the Trust Fund at the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York City. Showcasing their own committed actions not only increases attention to HMCCC in general, but also gathers support for the instruments and approaches pioneered by the Government of Fiji.

Fiji's approach to relocation contributes to implementing the FRDP, especially the sections calling on governments to develop policies to address HMCCC. The example shows that achieving results on the ground requires a combination of policies, guidelines, funding mechanisms and procedures. A single recommendation in a regional framework requires the development of complex structures in each country, putting expectations regarding their fast implementation into perspective. Regional frameworks and exchange allow other countries to build on lessons learned by the forerunners. However, this does not replace localising policies, as geographical features, land tenure systems, and migration options differ from country to county and strong stakeholder participation is needed to inform content and ensure acceptance. Countries like Fiji which take a proactive position on relocations are the basis that these topics can be taken up by regional frameworks leading to a mutual reinforcement of national and regional policies.

## FREE MOVEMENT AND REGIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

### Regional vulnerability and institutional frameworks

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<sup>21</sup> Republic of Fiji (2019): An Act to Establish a Trust Fund for the Planned Relocation of Communities in Fiji that are Adversely Affected by Climate Change. (<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Act-21-Climate-Relocation-of-Communities-Trust-Fund.pdf>).





Figure 3: Houses destroyed by Hurricanes.  
© Stephan Hornsey

Due to its geographic location large ocean states in the Eastern Caribbean are prone to a variety of extreme weather events and gradual impacts of climate change.<sup>22</sup> Climate projections for the Eastern Caribbean indicate that both rapid- and slow-onset events like hurricanes, floods and sea level rise will become even more severe and unpredictable in the future.<sup>23</sup> The impacts of these events often put the livelihoods and safety of people at significant risk. This can be exemplified by the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season. The three major hurricanes, Harvey, Irma and Maria displaced over three million people in one month.<sup>24</sup> In the Commonwealth of Dominica, Hurricane Maria caused damage of over 225 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), while Hurricane Irma resulted in such severe destruction in Barbuda that the entire population (approximately 1,600 persons) had to be evacuated.<sup>25</sup> In this and other examples, human mobility presents a common strategy to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of sudden-onset disasters as well as gradual processes, such as land degradation and coastal erosion.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is a good example of a strong regional, intergovernmental organisation that is dedicated to support its member states in raising awareness, building capacity and developing policies and frameworks which proactively address disaster risk reduction and disaster displacement. The OECS was established in 1981 and currently consists of seven full<sup>26</sup> and four associate member states.<sup>27</sup> To address HMCCC, the OECS Commission is facilitating an exchange between regional and national stakeholders from the respective ministries including climate change/environment, regional integration and immigration.<sup>28</sup>

### Response mechanisms to regional disaster displacement

The OECS Revised Treaty of Basseterre (2011) created an economic union, which allows for the free movement of people, goods, capital and cooperation while promoting socio-economic development across the Eastern Caribbean region.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the treaty permits citizens of OECS member states to move, reside and work freely throughout the OECS region without the need for a work permit or skills certificate. In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, for example, the treaty enabled affected people from the Commonwealth of Dominica to move to the neighbouring islands without any bureaucratic burdens. However, Hurricane Maria also pointed to some remaining challenges. The lack of official registration during immigration resulted in insufficient data on how many people had moved and where they had

<sup>22</sup> In September 2020 the OECS Commission decided to replace the term Small Island Development States (SIDS) by the notion of Large Ocean States to shift the discourse away from a focus on the vulnerabilities typically associated with SIDS to the potential of the 'oceanscape' these countries are part of.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer, N. and Strobl, E. (2020): Hurricanes, climate change, and social welfare: evidence from the Caribbean. In: *Climatic Change*, 163, p. 337-357.

<sup>24</sup> IDMC (2018): Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018. (<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/>).

<sup>25</sup> Caribbean Migration Consultations, CMC (2019): Plan of Action to Address Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change in the Caribbean (2020-2022). Draft version.

<sup>26</sup> OECS Full Member States are: Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

<sup>27</sup> OECS Associate Member States are: British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique, and Guadeloupe.

<sup>28</sup> OECS Commission (2021): Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change. (<https://www.oecs.org/climate-&-disaster-resilience/our-work/programmes-and-projects/hmccc.html>).

<sup>29</sup> OECS (2016): Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union. (<https://www.oecs.org/our-work/knowledge/library/legal/revised-treaty-of-basseterre>).

moved to. Conversations with OECS officials confirm that until today, the concrete number of people that migrated due to Hurricane Maria remains unknown. This also holds true for the number of people that have returned or have stayed in one of the neighbouring countries.

In order to address these gaps, the OECS Commission conducted a training for border officials to make the region's free movement of people agreement a more effective tool for protecting disaster displaced people.<sup>30</sup> The training aimed to sensitize border officials to ensure an adequate reception of displaced people with regard to mental health issues, traumatization as well as to support a better identification of victims of human trafficking. Nevertheless, further work needs to be done to better monitor the movement of people, create flexible capacities for schools, hospitals and correctional facilities as well as to simplify the identification of documents to ease access in cases where persons have lost all their belongings.

The ability to move to a less affected part of the country or a neighbouring country can be a crucial strategy to cope with the impacts of a disaster. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated additional challenges for such disaster-induced mobility. Contrary to the principles of the Free Movement of People Regime, counter measures, which aim to reduce the mobility of people as much as possible to curb the spread of the virus, restrict the movement of people who need to leave their island during the hurricane season. Against this backdrop, OECS Commission and GIZ drafted policy recommendations for the Commission and its member states to deal with similar challenges in the future. One recommendation of the policy brief suggests to "facilitate the coherence of key policies, mechanisms and approaches among OECS Member States in order to minimize differences in responding to displaced persons and cross-border migrants."<sup>31</sup> This would enhance the proactive management of climate-related human mobility.

In order to be able to address HMCCC in a structured way, the OECS Commission has furthermore developed a Strategic Plan (2020-2023) that defines priority areas and concrete activities.<sup>32</sup> Local consultations with three strongly affected communities as well as four scenario workshops were used as a starting point to develop ideas on how to address HMCCC in the OECS region in the future. The diverse ways in which HMCCC affects people and its cross-sectoral linkages, such as interplays with health, social protection or food security, was specifically highlighted. Additionally, to strengthening regional mechanisms and effective management of HMCCC, the Strategic Plan aims to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange on the topic beyond the region. The document calls for a holistic promotion and support of HMCCC, received high regional political attention and was discussed at the annual meeting of the OECS Council of Ministers of Environment and Sustainability who advised to pursue the formulated recommendations.<sup>33</sup>

This process as well as the active engagement of the OECS Commission in different working groups shows its great interest in and commitment to the development of regional frameworks regarding HMCCC and can serve as an example on how to systematically approach the nexus of climate change and human (im)mobility within a regional institution. However, since member states are responsible for the implementation on the national level, a close cooperation of both levels is key.

## NEW INITIATIVES FOR FREE MOVEMENT AND IMPROVED DATA BASE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

East Africa is increasingly exposed to the negative impacts of climate variability. Increasing rainfall variability leads to a higher probability of floods that have significant impacts on specific localities. In addition, droughts that affect large parts of the East African sub-region are becoming more frequent. They lead to

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<sup>30</sup> The training was implemented in cooperation with GIZ, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the PDD, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and CARICOM IMPACS.

<sup>31</sup> Maurice-George, N. (2020): Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change: Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Eastern Caribbean. Bonn: GIZ.

<sup>32</sup> OECS (2020): OECS Strategic Plan on Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change. (<https://pressroom.oecs.org/oecs-strategic-plan-on-human-mobility-in-the-context-of-climate-change>).

<sup>33</sup> OECS (2020): 7th Meeting of the Council of Ministers: Environmental Sustainability. Comes 7. Outcome Document.

massive drought-induced displacement, particularly by pastoralists and semi-pastoralists that inhabit highly drought-prone areas.<sup>34</sup> Changing patterns of movement among pastoral communities increase pressure on natural resources and local communities, and displaced populations are often hosted by communities who are themselves experiencing the adverse effects of disasters and climate change. Drought-related displacement is aggravated by other factors such as conflict, border insecurity and widespread poverty.<sup>35</sup>

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was initially created in 1986 as the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD) to coordinate regional efforts in combating desertification and promoting efforts to mitigate the effects of drought. Although its purview has been extended, until the present day, IGAD plays a major role in supporting its member states in reducing the impacts of droughts and other climate change-related processes.<sup>36</sup> In addition, IGAD also supports its member states in improving the management of climate change-related displacement and migration. Core strategies are laid out in the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (IGAD-RMPF)<sup>37</sup> adopted in 2015 and operationalized through the IGAD-Migration Action Plan (IGAD-MAP) 2015-2020.<sup>38</sup>

### The IGAD Free Movement Protocol – A Regional Effort to Better Address Disaster Displacement

Recently, the IGAD region took an important step on the way to strengthening assistance and protecting people threatened or affected by disaster-displacement. On 26 February 2020, following years of negotiations and consultations, all seven active Member States endorsed the IGAD Free Movement Protocol.<sup>39</sup> Article 16 of the Protocol calls upon Member states to allow those who have been displaced by disasters to seek refuge in their territory, to take measures to facilitate their stay and the exercise of their rights and to ensure that they will not be sent home until it is safe and reasonable to return. It also incorporates those at risk of displacement and allows them to move pre-emptively to avoid or mitigate disaster impacts. This explicit reference to challenges faced by disaster displaced people is a quite unique feature of the IGAD free movement protocol. Most existing agreements, such as the long-standing protocol established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1979<sup>40</sup>, have not been developed with the protection needs of disaster displaced persons in mind.<sup>41</sup>

For the potential of the IGAD Free Movement Protocol to be realised, proper implementation is key. Therefore, IGAD developed a Roadmap for its implementation that describes measures to be taken by IGAD member states when putting free movement arrangements into practice. It calls upon IGAD member states to “develop, review and harmonize laws, policies and procedures to facilitate the movement of persons displaced by disasters in accordance with the Protocol (Article 16)”<sup>42</sup> until 2028.

Practical strategies for ensuring the effective implementation of free movement agreements were also at

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<sup>34</sup> Schraven, B., Adaawen, S., Rademacher-Schulz, C. & Segadlo, N. (2020): Climate Change Impacts on Human (Im-) Mobility in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent Trends and Options for Policy Responses. Bonn: GIZ. ([https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GIZ\\_Climate-impacts-on-human-mobility-Africa.pdf](https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GIZ_Climate-impacts-on-human-mobility-Africa.pdf)).

<sup>35</sup> Wood, T. (2019): The Role of Free Movement of Persons Agreements in Addressing Disaster Displacement in Africa with Focus on ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC. Platform on Disaster Displacement. (<https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/free-movement-stakeholder-workshop-report>).

<sup>36</sup> IGAD Member States are: Djibouti, Eritrea (membership currently suspended), Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

<sup>37</sup> IGAD (2012): IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework. (<https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/icp/igad-regional-migration-policy-framework1.pdf>).

<sup>38</sup> IGAD (2014): IGAD-Migration Action Plan (MAP) to Operationalize The IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (IGAD-RMPF) 2015-2020. ([https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our\\_work/ICP/RCP/2018/igad/igadmigrationactionplan2015-2020.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ICP/RCP/2018/igad/igadmigrationactionplan2015-2020.pdf)).

<sup>39</sup> IGAD (2020): Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region.

<sup>40</sup> ECOWAS (1979): Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/492187502.html>).

<sup>41</sup> Wood, T. (2018): The Role of Free Movement of Persons Agreements in Addressing Disaster Displacement – A Study of Africa. Platform on Disaster Displacement. (<https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/free-movement-of-persons-africa>).

<sup>42</sup> IGAD (2020): The Roadmap for Implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region.



the centre of discussions during a regional stakeholder workshop in 2019.<sup>43</sup> Participants highlighted that effective implementation of the IGAD Protocol in the context of disasters and climate change will require member states to realize policy coherence relating to HMCCC (e. g. integration of climate change action plans with migration policies). Furthermore, there is a need to develop trainings for the management of disaster displacement, including cross-border simulation exercises and development of SOPs. The further development of bilateral arrangements for disaster displacement ‘hotspot’ border areas within the IGAD region, could also promote inter-state cooperation. Identifying those hotspots and building the capacity of national institutions to better anticipate, prevent and respond to disaster displacement requires the development of climate change and human mobility-related data that will inform and support these strategies.<sup>44</sup> The implementation of many of these activities will benefit from an improved data base for climate-related human mobility which provides a better picture of the current and future extent, type and regional focus of mobility.

### Improving the Data Base for Evidence-Based Policy Development and Implementation - New Initiatives

Currently, there is very little data and no standardized methodology for modelling the impact of rapid and slow-onset events as well as gradual climatic changes on human mobility in the region. This limits IGAD’s capacity to map, understand, predict and address migration and displacement and support its member states in developing and implementing adequate policies and strategies for managing HMCCC. Therefore, the IGAD Climate Predictions and Applications Centre (ICPAC) – a specialized institution within IGAD that provides climate information and early warning services – is aiming at expanding its services to the IGAD member states with respect to providing data on HMCCC to support operational policy decision making. So far, ICPAC has realized first steps in compiling data on displacements related to specific disaster-events from the member states. However, these data are not provided in a consistent manner and comprise raw proxies such as housing units damaged or destroyed that need to be extrapolated in a consistent manner.

With support from partners such as IOM, the International Labour Organization (ILO), GIZ, PDD and UNHCR, ICPAC is currently embarking on new initiatives to improve its data base. On the one hand, it aims at developing methodologies for monitoring disaster displacement consistently throughout the region and modelling displacement risk related to rapid onset events. On the other hand, ICPAC also takes first steps to model the impact of slow-onset events such as droughts on human mobility in the region based on different climate change and development scenarios.

In order to coordinate the support by different international organisations and agencies and to foster exchange of good practices and lessons learned, IGAD, including ICPAC, and several international partners joined a Displacement Working Group in February 2020. The working group will ensure that all activities related to climate-related human mobility are linked with ongoing initiatives such as National Coordination Mechanisms on Migration and the Technical Advisory Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction/Management.

## CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The examples described above highlight the importance of addressing HMCCC on multiple levels. As the case studies show, regional organisations can be instrumental in developing policy frameworks which guide and boost national action while also relying on national champions and willingness to engage as demonstrated by the example of Fiji. They are also instrumental in brokering legal agreements for free movement which are of major importance for successfully managing climate-related human mobility across

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<sup>43</sup> PDD (2019): The Role of Free Movement of Persons Agreements in Addressing Disaster Displacement in Africa with Focus on ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC Regions. Stakeholder Workshop Report. (<https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PDD-Free-Movement-Stakeholder-Workshop-Report-2019.pdf>).

<sup>44</sup> PDD (2019): The Role of Free Movement of Persons Agreements in Addressing Disaster Displacement in Africa with Focus on ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC. ([https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/52846\\_PDD\\_FreeMovement\\_web-single\\_compressed.pdf](https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/52846_PDD_FreeMovement_web-single_compressed.pdf)).

borders. Regional organisations can also take a lead in raising awareness and building the capacities of their member states for dealing with HMCCC. Examples from all three regions show that the establishment of dedicated Technical Working Groups on different levels is an important step to ensure that disaster displacement, climate-induced migration, and planned relocation are discussed with experts from several relevant sectors, policy levels and countries that share similar challenges. Such working groups are instrumental in strengthening commitment by various actors to take action.

Free Movement Agreements can be a powerful tool to reduce hardship after disaster events by allowing people to move to less affected areas. For a successful implementation, capacities need to be developed, national policies aligned, procedures established, and support structures, including for receiving communities, set-up. This is a complex and time-consuming process that needs sustained support from political actors within the region and from international partners.

However, setting up a free movement protocol does not solve all issues, as the example of displaced people after Hurricane Maria shows. Consistent mechanisms and instruments to deal with related factors such as post-disaster population flows are therefore needed as well. All of this requires a close coordination between regional organisations and national governments, which in turn requires a high degree of trust between the participating countries and in many cases will benefit targeted external support. In future, the exchange of experiences with implementing such agreements between different regional organisations should be strengthened. Learning from the experiences of others, south-south exchanges between different regions can generally inspire policy makers to adapt approaches tested in other parts of the world to their own context. Joint workshops, international conferences and delegation visits can be a building block for this.

However, regional approaches are not a silver bullet to solve all challenges associated with HMCCC. Finding common positions among member states of regional organisations can be challenging for example in view of their differences, lack of resources to implement regional policies, and lack of alignment of national and regional frameworks. In some cases, deliberations on the regional level can benefit from strong national actors who take the lead and try something new, inspiring others by example. The international community should continue to support the development of tailored national approaches and disseminate good practices globally.

The level of international agreements, protocols and conventions has not been covered extensively in this paper but is doubtless crucial as well. As climate-related human mobility encompasses movements on a local level, internal as well as cross-border to neighbouring countries, the interplay between these levels needs to be taken into account when policies are further developed. In the end, the effective interaction between regional organisations, national actors and an alignment of global strategies and frameworks will play a pivotal role in generating continued political commitment to address HMCCC, so that the benefits of migration are optimized while the risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination are reduced as much as possible.