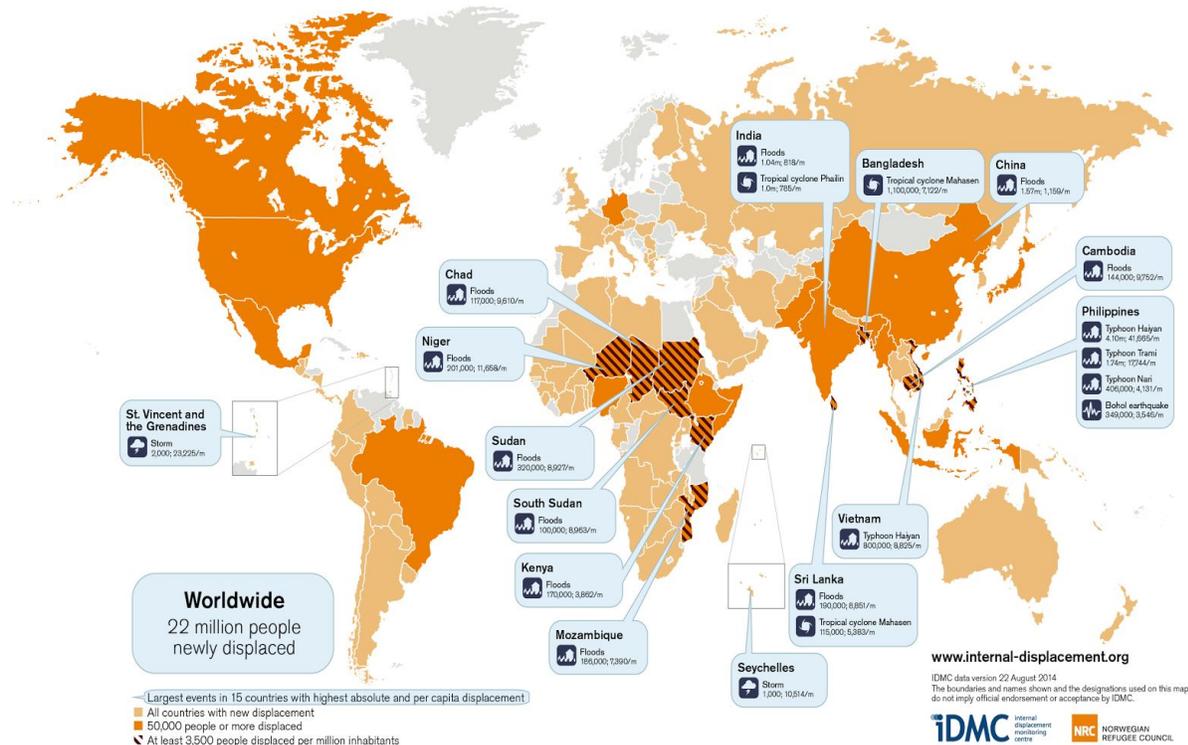


FORUM: POLITICAL AND TERRITORIAL
 ISSUE: RESETTLEMENT OF POPULATIONS DISPLACED DUE TO
 CLIMATE CHANGE
 OMKAR CHARATI

Introduction:

"Each passing day brings yet more evidence that we are now facing a planetary emergency, a climate crisis that demands immediate attention." – Al Gore

Disaster-induced displacement worldwide in 2013



People can be displaced from their livelihoods due to various reasons be it war, internal conflict, or even climate change. Displacement due to climate change has only recently become a problem due to global warming. Displacement and resettlement go hand in hand, people who are displaced from their homeland have to be given another place to live and resume their lives.

Definition of key terms:

For the purpose of this report:

Climate Change: It means a change of climate that is associated either directly or indirectly to human activity that changes the composition of the global atmosphere.

Displacement: Over here, displacement would refer to the forced movement of people from their locality, environment or occupational activities due to a number of factors, one of which being climate change.

Resettlement: The process of moving people to a different place to live because they are unable to stay in the area where they used to live due to various reasons, but in this case being climate change.

HLP Rights: These are the Housing, Living and Property rights that every person is supposed to have access to. When a person is displaced due to climatic consequences they should have access to the following most basic HLP rights:

- The right to adequate housing and rights in housing.
- The right to information
- The right to be free from discrimination
- The right to equality of treatment and access
- The right to water
- The right to energy
- The right to HLP restitution/compensation following forced displacement

Background Information:

Over the past few decades, displacement due to climate change has not been considered as a major problem. The 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) did not even touch upon the topic. Likewise, the 1951 Refugee Convention didn't recognise the particular rights of climate change displaced persons, nor did any of the other important human rights treaties. The absence of addition of climate change displaced persons has led some to propose the amendment of the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol to cover the protection of the climate change displaced people and include them in the Convention. It wasn't until 2007 that a series of initiatives were undertaken in this regard.

Major Countries and Organizations involved:

The countries that have been the most heavily-affected due to the climate change-induced displacement of their population include Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Bangladesh. Other countries like China (est. 30m displaced), India (est. 30m displaced) and Egypt (est. 14m displaced) are also in a dire state.

Organizations:

IPCC: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a scientific body under the supervision of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change.

IOM: The International Organization of Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization that was initially established in 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to help with the resettlement of people displaced by World War II. It is the foremost intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and aims to promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.

UNHCR: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), otherwise called the UN Refugee Agency, is a United Nations Agency authorized to protect and support refugees at the request of a government or the UN itself and helps in their voluntary local integration or resettlement to a third country.

Timeline of Events:

- **Dec 2007:** Adaptation and humanitarian concerns enter regular discussions in Conference Of Parties (COP13) in Bali.
- **Mid 2008:** IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Company) Task Force becomes active in articulating humanitarian concerns.
- **Autumn 2008:** IASC establishes Task Force Sub-group on Climate Change, Migration and Displacement to explore issues.
- **Dec 2008:** Migration and Displacement first mentioned in UNFCCC assembly text (precursor to draft negotiating texts).
- **Dec 2008-Nov 2009:** COP14 is held in Poznan and various organizations help bring migration and displacement to process.
- **Dec 2009:** Migration and displacement text assumes nearly final form during the COP15 in Copenhagen.
- **Nov 2010:** Draft paragraphs on migration and displacement in negotiations text, and increasing policy discussions on the issue.
- **Dec 2010:** Finally, at COP16, Parties decided to accept the draft text containing several key elements for adaptation including the Cancun Adaptation Framework and including para 14(f) on migration and displacement.

Possible Solutions:

Making certain improvements in the HLP rights can help the displaced populations to voice their concerns as well as provide them with better living conditions after losing their livelihood. In order to make these rights as effective as possible, ensuring genuine consultation with and participation by affected communities is also a possible solution.

Promoting Community Land Trusts will ensure that there is no shortage of land when it is needed for the resettlement of the populations affected by climate change.

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