



## NGO ExCom Side Event Resilient communities in climate-induced displacement (9 October 2020) Summary

### Introduction

On 9 October 2020, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) organized a virtual side event on “[Resilient communities in climate-induced displacement](#)” on the margins of UNHCR’s 71<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee meeting. Informed by reports recently published by non-governmental organisations – [CARE International](#), [Internal Displacement Monitoring Center](#) and [Social Inquiry](#) – the event explored the links between climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters and forced displacement. With a particular focus on Somalia, the South of Iraq, and the need to increase gender-transformative approaches, panelists and participants reflected on communities’ experiences and resilience. Moderated by Ms. Loise Dai Rocheteau, Policy officer at ICVA, and gathering over 80 participants, the meeting benefited from a variety of inputs from different stakeholders.

### Overview of presentations

**Mr. Sven Harmeling**, Global Policy Lead on Climate Change and Resilience at CARE International, focused on how climate change exacerbates displacement drivers while also severely affecting women and girls. He particularly looked at consequences for them and at how to address those impacts<sup>1</sup>. As driver of displacement, climate change effects will increasingly overwhelm entire societies if we do not reduce its causes and do not boost preventive adaptation. The outlook for the future – though not a prophecy – described by scientific findings point to an average of 2-3 degrees Celsius increase in global temperature this century. For example, the World Bank Group estimated that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to climate change might be four times higher in 2050, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia<sup>2</sup>. For its part, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that forced displacement is expected to be one of the most common and damaging impacts worldwide if we fail to keep the temperature rise below 1.5 degree. Thus, Mr. Harmeling argued, it is extremely important to not talk about adapting to climate change and managing its impact without at the same time calling to limit it. Based on some illustrations of the impacts of droughts, landslides, cyclones connected with displacement in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Vanuatu, Mr. Harmeling asked what the possible solutions or at least the responses might be.

“Given that the impacts of climate change are felt differently based on one’s gender, so must the approaches for addressing these impacts”.

The recommendations included adopting gender-transformative approaches in all climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and in climate induced humanitarian preparedness as well as response interventions and programmes. The gender-transformative approach have had a positive impact on increasing resilience to the disruptions caused by climate change, including on, for example, strengthening food security, diversifying livelihoods, and improving WASH infrastructures. More specifically, Mr. Harmeling emphasized the need to amplify women’s and girls’ voices, to support them to fully and directly participate and play a meaningful leadership role in all relevant coordination and decision-making fora, whether humanitarian or climate fora and to develop approaches that take their views and needs into account.

The need for increased adaptation is also necessary including adaptation in finance as well as humanitarian finance. The current approach to dealing with those issues, with a gender equality perspective, is insufficient and lacks coherence, we need to look at a diverse set of national and international actors and institutions to play a role, including women at the discussion table.

<sup>1</sup> CARE International, *Evicted by climate change: Confronting the gendered impacts of climate-induced displacement*, July 2020: <https://careclimatechange.org/evicted-by-climate-change/>

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank Group, *Groundswell: Preparing for internal climate migration*, March 2018: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461>

In December 2018, the **Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)** embarked on a research programme to investigate internal displacement associated with slow-onset disasters and environmental change<sup>3</sup>. Part of this research programme, the study<sup>4</sup> presented by **Mr. Pablo Ferrández**, Research Associate at IDMC, examined displacement associated with drought in **Somalia**, the ways in which the phenomenon has affected urbanisation in the country and resilient communities' processes. Today, Somalia is experiencing prolonged droughts and the frequency and intensity of such episodes have aggravated poverty and triggered cycle of internal displacement patterns following climate shocks often to urban and peri-urban areas. Both nomadic and sedentary communities are forced to move to urban settlements.

“We consider strengthening resilience and reducing risk and vulnerability needs to go beyond a livelihoods approach to an economic inclusion approach”.

The pull factors that guided the internal displacement estimation varied in function of nomadic and sedentary groups, but many answers to a survey revealed the need to seek better economic opportunities and security as well as the loss of livestock and conflict for the push factors.

Mr. Ferrandez contributed to a better understanding of policies and programming for durable solutions in the country. Despite growing pressure on infrastructures and services, many IDPs would prefer to integrate locally. Increasing inclusive economic opportunities for the country's growing and increasingly urbanized population would accelerate progress toward stabilisation and the achievement of durable solutions for communities affected by displacement. In Somalia, a number of activities have already been successful to advance local integration. Among several examples, there are trainings in entrepreneurship for female heads of household to prepare them to set up small and medium-sized businesses, the provision of start-up grants, the establishment of communal farms for agro-pastoralists to plant cash crops, the re-establishment of pastoralist livelihoods by providing goats and other livestock, and vocational skills workshops. At the same time, local leadership capabilities need to be enhanced to facilitate sustainable return, recovery, social integration and peaceful coexistence of disparate groups, including IDPs, returnees, migrants and host communities. Programmes such as « Midnimo », which means unity, and « Danwadaag », which means love, focus on strengthening government leadership and capacity to enable durable solutions at the state and district levels.

**Mr. Roger Guiu's** presentation, Co-Director at **Social Inquiry**, explored displacement triggered by water scarcity in the **South of Iraq**, and discussed dynamics around the implications on community resilience to withstand environmental degradation<sup>5</sup>. The southern part of Iraq, a poor area, did not get the attention it deserves considering the magnitude of the problem. Most of the focus in Iraq is on the North because it is where the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) conflict affects mostly.

“Where does conflict fit in here? Is it a cause, an aggravator or a consequence of displacement? In the context of Iraq, it seems that internal displacement has aggravated fragility, in the sense of a lack of voices from communities, a lack of agencies and organisations presence, the absence of State and all of this gives room for instability “.

This area lies at the lowest reaches of the Tigris-Euphrates river basin, where water flow is most limited and heavily polluted by upstream run-offs or seawater intrusion. Factors contributing to this situation include the indirect impacts of climate change on the region in addition to the loss of arable land; the increase of urban water demand paired with an outdated and neglected infrastructure prone to leakages; and finally, the absence of transboundary governance agreement for the Tigris-Euphrates river system between Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. As a consequence of these slow-onset environmental changes, arable and livestock farmers are less able to draw water. After years of decreasing agricultural yields, crop failures and livestock deaths, more families were forced to move internally. For those who stayed, the capacity to be resilient decreased while their needs increased. Counting less and less for authorities, investments have contracted, leading to reduced efforts to improve the situation. The convergence of governance gaps and environmental change is undermining the ability of people to adapt in the South. Mr. Guiu called for increasing

<sup>3</sup> For more information, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, [Thematic series: No matter of choice: displacement in a changing climate](#)

<sup>4</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, *No land, no water, no pasture: the urbanization of drought displacement in Somalia*, March 2020: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/no-land-no-water-no-pasture-the-urbanisation-of-drought-displacement-in-somalia>

<sup>5</sup> Social Inquiry, *When canals run dry: displacement triggered by water stress in the South of Iraq*, February 2020: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/when-canals-run-dry-displacement-triggered-by-water-stress-in-the-south-of-iraq>



resilience in rural areas and shifting approaches to better respond to Iraq's environmental challenges. International community support in the South is particularly key to the development of a regional framework for more equitable distribution of water resources, ensuring the impacts of slow-onset environmental change including displacement and disaster risk reduction, are integrated into post-ISIL recovery and reconstruction plans.

### Open exchange

Participants discussed how to advance the national and international institutional architecture for addressing climate-induced displacement and what the opportunities are in the next months. The United Nations Framework for Climate Change Convention, the Loss and Damage Mechanism, the Task Force on Displacement, the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement are concrete opportunities. However, attention is needed to better strategise around the role of the different UN organisations, agencies and treaties. At the international level, some participants suggested the need to set parameters to ensure gender is considered while we discuss Climate Action and displacement. For instance, these may include ensuring 50% of participants in key meetings are women, including from at risk and/or displaced communities, and from diverse backgrounds, age groups, language and literacy barriers. Rights of women impacted by climate change should be considered and addressed. In advancing the agenda on forced displacement due to climate change, it was noted that in addition to UN organisations, agencies and Member States, NGOs and affected communities, including women and girls, also have a major role to play in shaping, implementing and continuously assessing the impact of proposed solutions. It is important to fill the legal and financial gaps and have a good division of roles and responsibilities.

At regional level, in Somalia and in Ethiopia, there are good examples with the Durable Solutions Initiatives, considered as key multi-stakeholders' engagements in the search for durable solutions.

The recommendations made during the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations session on Climate Action<sup>6</sup>, the upcoming UNHCR Strategic Framework on Climate Action and ensuing regional Plans of Action are additional opportunities to strengthen the national and international architecture.

Beyond this architecture and on the protection aspect in particular, several participants reflected upon the current protection gaps for people displaced by disaster and others displaced in the context of climate change. Participants insisted on the need to further promote gender-transformative approaches and look into how gender dynamics in climate-induced displacement can be addressed. Some elements of answers were provided by suggesting to systematically use rapid gender analysis<sup>7</sup> and ensuring women led and women rights organizations are supported to participate and have a seat at relevant decision-making tables. In addition, it was recommended to improve, at State-level, institutional coordination and collaboration across Ministries. This should include ministries in charge of gender equality but not only classical ones.

Taking a gender transformative approach also implies looking at issues such as land rights for the climate-induced displaced and for women in particular who, all too often, do not have equal land, property, inheritance and family rights in comparison to men. These should be part of an international framework, either looking at claiming land back when the displaced return or at the right to own land in host communities when return is not an option. A practical example of gender analysis applied to climate situations shared is CARE's Gender Sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (GCVCA) practitioners guidebook.<sup>8</sup> It provides a framework for analyzing vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change and build resilience to disasters at the community level, with a particular focus on social and gender dynamics, based on experiences of using the approach in Mozambique. CARE has since then used the GCVCA in refugee contexts as well, including in Uganda, where it also enabled joint analysis by host communities and refugees and prompted joint actions to reduce environmental and climate impacts in gender transformative manners in refugee hosting communities.

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<sup>6</sup> UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations 2020: <https://www.unhcr.org/2020-unhcr-annual-consultations-with-ngos/>

<sup>7</sup> CARE insights, In practice, Rapid Gender Analysis: <https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/in-practice/rapid-gender-analysis>

<sup>8</sup> CARE Mozambique, *Gender-sensitive climate vulnerability and capacity analysis*, July 2014: [https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/GCVCA\\_Practitioners-Guide-FINAL-July-2014.pdf](https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/GCVCA_Practitioners-Guide-FINAL-July-2014.pdf) and CARE, *Climate vulnerability and capacity analysis Handbook, informing community-based adaptation, resilience and gender-equality*, July 2020: <https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CARE-CVCA-Handbook-EN-v0.8-web.pdf>



## Conclusion

In closing, ICVA thanked participants and speakers. Addressing climate-induced displacement is a critical as well as urgent work and it will be paramount to increase our collective focus on Climate Action to achieve *inter alia* the protection of climate-induced displaced populations.

The NGO side event stressed the need for a strong integration of displacement and climate change considerations in a gender-transformative and human rights way. Across these areas, there is a need for more effective collaboration between various stakeholders, to boost women's leadership and increased financial and technical support for gender equality organizations.

ICVA will continue to address such topics, in cooperation with its members and other partners.

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### About CARE:

CARE is a confederation of 14 members working around 100 countries to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. CARE's focus is on women and girls and puts gender equality in the centre because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities. Our long-term development and humanitarian programs include women's economic empowerment, Food and nutrition security, climate change resilience, prevention and response to Gender based Violence, Sexual, Reproductive and maternal health and rights.

To know more about CARE's work: Consult <https://www.care-international.org/> and to learn more specifically about CARE's climate change related programs and models consult <https://www.careclimatechange.org> - Follow on Twitter: [@harmeling](https://twitter.com/harmeling) - Contact: [sharmeling@careclimatechange.org](mailto:sharmeling@careclimatechange.org)

### About IDMC:

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the world's definitive source of data and analysis on internal displacement. Since their establishment in 1998 as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), IDMC have offered a rigorous, independent and trusted service to the international community. IDMC's work informs policy and operational decisions that improve the lives of the millions of people living in internal displacement, or at risk of becoming displaced in the future.

IDMC is planning a second step of the research "No land, no water, no pasture: the urbanisation of drought displacement in Somalia" with a focus on the durable solutions in Somalia and in Ethiopia, in particular on local integration. The new research will start in November 2020 together with UNDP and a local University.

To know more about IDMC's work: Consult the webpage: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/> - Follow on Twitter: [@IDMC\\_Geneva](https://twitter.com/IDMC_Geneva) - Contact [pablo.ferrandez@idmc.ch](mailto:pablo.ferrandez@idmc.ch)

### About Social Inquiry:

Social Inquiry is non-profit research institution formed in 2017, and focused on influencing policy and praxis that repairs the civic trust and the social fabric within and between fragile communities, and communities and the state. Social Inquiry research falls into three main thematic areas: social cohesion and fragility, reconciliation and transitional justice, and post-conflict political economy.

To know more about Social Inquiry's work: Consult the webpage: [www.social-inquiry.org](http://www.social-inquiry.org) - Follow on Twitter: [@inquiry\\_org](https://twitter.com/inquiry_org) - Contact [roger@social-inquiry.org](mailto:roger@social-inquiry.org) & [aaso@social-inquiry.org](mailto:aaso@social-inquiry.org)

### About ICVA:

ICVA is a global network of NGOs whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. Established in 1962 by a small coalition of refugee and migration NGOs, ICVA has grown into a diverse network of over 100 NGO members operating in 160 countries at global, regional, national and local levels. ICVA helps its members understand, engage and influence the humanitarian sector with a focus on Forced migration; Humanitarian coordination; Humanitarian financing; and Cross-cutting issues. To know more about ICVA's work: - Consult our webpage: <https://www.icvanetwork.org/forced-migration> - Follow us on Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ICVA\\_Displaced](https://twitter.com/ICVA_Displaced) - Contact [jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org](mailto:jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org) and [Loise.dairocheteau@icvanetwork.org](mailto:Loise.dairocheteau@icvanetwork.org)