

## Outcomes Summary - Roundtable 4 Climate Change: Safe Labour Routes as a Bridge to Prosperity<sup>1</sup>

First Roundtable (RT) Consultations – Geneva, 6 November 2024

### INTRODUCTION

This note captures the main points discussed during the first roundtable consultations held in Geneva on 6-7 November 2024. The focus of the first consultations was to map **challenges and opportunities** related to the theme of each Roundtable. The outcome summary has been prepared with the following resources: flipchart protocols, recordings of the ‘harvesting of ideas’ and notes gathered from each small circle/host wherever available. The second consultations, which will be held in Geneva on 19-20 February 2025 will focus on the **exchange of policies and practices**. Main outcomes will be presented at the outset of the consultations to ensure continuity and progression of discussions as the programme advances, to build upon each step of the process.

### CHALLENGES

#### **Lack of specific legal and policy frameworks for climate change-related human mobility**

The complexity of legal and policy frameworks applicable to people moving in the context of the adverse effects of climate change was identified as one of the key challenges, and in particular the lack of legal and policy frameworks that are specific for climate-affected groups and individuals. Insufficient coordination among various international frameworks and mandates further complicates the issue. Climate adaptation measures are not systematically included in current frameworks, highlighting the need for stronger, more inclusive legal and policy responses to climate-related human mobility, including migration and displacement. In addition, lack of clarity on the migratory status of those moving in the context of climate change poses extensive challenges.

#### **Lack of rights-based and human-centered approaches**

There is an inadequate understanding of the rights-based issues related to climate change and human mobility. Furthermore, the agency of people in the face of climate change impacts is not well-understood, hindering development of appropriate policy responses.

#### **Silo approach leading to policy fragmentation, lack of coordination and integrated approaches**

Addressing climate change-related human mobility in isolation, rather than through holistic and integrated approaches, was highlighted as a significant concern. This narrow focus often leads to fragmented policymaking and insufficient national policy development across relevant policy and action areas. Policy fragmentation was identified as a key challenge, with climate change-related

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<sup>1</sup> Roundtable 4 is co-chaired by Bangladesh, (represented by Goutam Kumar Dey (Counsellor, Permanent Mission), Nigeria, represented by Nwatamasaya Papka (Senior Counsellor Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Mission). It benefits from the facilitation of Silvia Gomez (invited in her personal capacity), and the support of technical Atle Solberg (PDD), Dina Ionesco (UNHCR), Gladys Cisneros (ILO).

human mobility falling between migration, humanitarian, disaster risk reduction, economic, social, health, labour and climate change policy areas. Policy makers and stakeholders from diverse areas are not necessarily connected in finding solutions to climate mobility challenges - there is a lack of a system thinking approach.

Policies often fail to incorporate necessary climate change adaptation and resilience measures, leaving vulnerable populations at risk and exposed to possible harm. There is also a notable oversight in considering the distinct challenges faced by urban and rural areas, which experience varying levels of climate change impacts. National adaptation and development plans and funding allocations do not account for these differences to ensure tailored strategies, such as targeted evacuation plans, planned relocation as a last resort and improved information sharing. Furthermore, climate change financing should also be directed toward cities to enhance their capacity to manage climate risks and support affected populations.

Another facet leading to this silo approach is the lack of cooperation among countries, and among national, regional and local authorities, hindering effective responses to climate change-related human mobility. The lack of coordination among relevant UN agencies and mandates was raised as an additional challenge. A ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach is lacking to address the challenges of human mobility in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. In looking at the big picture, the lack of consideration of the impact of colonisation and decolonization measures was flagged as a concern.

### **Regular pathways gap**

A lack of specific migration rights-based pathways for people affected by climate change - in particular, pathways connected to skills and in situations where people are compelled to move for green jobs - was identified as a key challenge towards safety for individuals on the move and towards sustainable responses for all.

### **Gaps in skills for green jobs**

There is an overall lack of workers with skills for green jobs, which needs to be urgently addressed in all countries. While labour migration could play a role in helping fill specific gaps, the lack of harmonization and recognition of green skills across countries creates significant barriers, which are often exacerbated by obstacles such as lengthy administrative procedures, lack of document recognition, and failure to digitalize these processes.

There is an insufficient number of green skill-building initiatives, along with a lack of initiatives to identify the specific skills required by governments and businesses. Limited financing was identified as a major challenge to address the green skill gap. Countries and companies frequently overlook the importance of developing workers’ skills in the green sector, or expanding migration pathways for green skills.

On the other side, in a context of overall shortages of skilled workers, skilled mobility can lead to a “green brain drain”. Migration pathways connected to skills tend to prioritize high-skilled individuals, thus overlooking the regular and safe mobility of low-skilled populations who can often contribute in important ways to transitions and are often those most affected by climate change events. They may furthermore not guarantee access to decent jobs, hindering just transitions.

### **Data and knowledge gap**

Concerns were raised about the limited knowledge and understanding of climate-related events, migration patterns, as well as driving forces, risks and hazards that make people migrate (i.e. deforestation, rising sea levels), or which force people to stay in place. Lack of data was also flagged, with agreement on the challenges and consequences derived from this, such as root causes not being addressed and inadequate and non-evidence-based policy responses. The need to collect disaggregated data, particularly statistics of men and women on climate related human mobility was highlighted.

### **Negative narratives and social stigma**

Climate change denial fueled by the rise of right-wing governments and populism was identified as a challenge leading to limited development of policies to address climate related mobility across political spectrums. Negative narratives surrounding climate change and migration further exacerbate the issue, undermining efforts to address its impacts, resulting in delays in necessary policy implementations and further policy developments.

Migration is not perceived as a climate adaptation mechanism which causes people on the move to resort to unsafe migratory routes and leads to occurrence of violation of human rights and dignity or other dangerous conditions in transit and destination countries.

### **Lack of financing**

A general lack of funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation including green skills building initiatives was identified. In particular, there is a lack of funding and capacity building support in countries that are most adversely impacted by climate change. Moreover, climate change-related funds are often not connected to developing regular migration pathways for displaced people or people on the move in the context of adverse effects of climate change.

### **Lack of access to technology**

The lack of access to technologies was flagged as a challenge leading to either limited adaptation or slower progress in an area in which rapid action is necessary. The gap in access to technology can result in the absence of early-warning systems and critical information in areas where it is most needed.

**Lack of inclusion and representation** of population and communities affected in discussions, decision making, solution building and implementation of policies.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Recognize the enhanced expertise, data and knowledge on the topic**

The expertise of States and their access to climate-affected populations were highlighted as important factors. Furthermore, the expertise and key contributions from other actors were raised as key opportunities and strengths to advance. UN agencies, civil society, diaspora, people with lived experience, workers, cities and local governments/actors, private sector/industry and youth were identified. Already existing data is available and can be used more effectively to inform policy decisions on climate change-related migration.

### **Build upon existing inclusive and multistakeholder partnerships**

Growing cooperation and existing multistakeholder partnerships were identified as spaces to advance more holistic and comprehensive solutions. The importance of these multistakeholder

partnerships adopting a rights-based approach rather than a business approach and including a focus on climate change education and upskilling of affected population was highlighted. Representation and inclusion of affected populations in decision making spaces was flagged as an opportunity for further growth.

### **Acknowledge and build on dynamic regional processes**

The potential of intra-regional cooperation and cooperation across regions, in particular by developing common approaches, building consensus, sharing of good practices, evidence and learnings was highlighted (e.g. south-South collaboration and sharing between countries affected by similar climate issues).

### **Acknowledge and expand the dynamic role of local actors and cities**

Particular focus was placed on the role and expertise of cities and local actors in localizing solutions and ensuring the right adaptation measures are put in place, with existing, successful city partnerships and initiatives for sharing experiences.

### **Build on progress already made to fill skill gaps for green jobs**

Increasing efforts to train workers with skills for green jobs, harmonization and recognition of green skills coupled with skill intelligence, anticipation and the use of digitalization to streamline procedures and document recognition, were identified as key steps to building green skill pathways.

Strengthened cooperation with the private sector and workers' organizations can support in identifying relevant skills that are needed, thus creating relevant jobs. Developing (and funding) training programs and courses through social dialogue which are integrated into national systems on green skills, renewable energies, and sustainable planning - particularly for populations most affected by climate change – will help in addressing brain drain and in overall upskilling of population towards better prevention and adaptation. Building green skills of migrants can revert back to communities of origin, address brain drain and support a holistic approach in harnessing the potential of climate related mobility.

### **Build on enhanced UN processes dealing with regular pathways, human mobility, climate change**

Better UN coordination offers an opportunity towards a framework for climate-induced migration that includes climate-related pathways and ensures the safety of migrants, leveraging existing instruments applicable to climate-displaced populations, such as the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM), the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and decisions of the UNFCCC.

### **Recognize enhanced awareness on green and just transition**

There is increasing willingness to tackle climate issues, with growing awareness and funding dedicated to a just transition. This includes a greater focus on developing green skills and addressing adaptation needs. Both employers and workers are increasingly engaging on issues related to climate change, leading to opportunities for a just transition that supports sustainable development and decent work.

### **Leverage the role of media, including social media**

Media was identified as a channel to change negative narratives, create evidence-based awareness and increase the overall understanding of climate change and its effects with regards to human

mobility. Leveraging the role of media, particularly social media to share good news, positive insights, practices and initiatives rather than negative ones and amplify youth voices in climate and migration narratives, as their creativity and influence can be harnessed to amplify success stories, advocate for and inspire sustainable solutions,

**Build on the inclusion of migration, displacement and planned relocation in the climate funds architecture**

Growing available funding on adequate prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures allows for sustainable responses and resilience building to provide people with the option to move in various countries. Furthermore, unlocking existing climate funds and linking them to the development of regular pathways would allow for more climate affected migrants to move in safety. Additionally, the key role of remittances represents an opportunity to contribute to adaptation in rural communities.

**Harness climate awareness for labour migration opportunities**

There is a growing acknowledgment of climate change from employers and workers which can lead to more labour opportunities.