



**United Nations**  
Climate Change Secretariat

**Nations Unies**  
Secrétariat sur les changements climatiques

## UNFCCC Statement to IOM Council – November 2017

Delivered by Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary

Madam Chairperson  
Director General  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates

It is a great pleasure for me to address IOM Council, especially after serving in IOM Administration for more than 25 years.

As many of you know, I have recently migrated from UN Migration Organization to UN Climate Change Secretariat. Today, I am representing the United Nations Secretariat for Climate Change.

UNFCCC and IOM are already working in several areas to address the Human Dimension of Climate Change. Much more needs to be done, especially in the context of Global Compact for Migration.

I thank the IOM Council for admitting UNFCCC as an observer to IOM.

My comments today will focus on three points:



## 1. Human dimension of climate change

- When we talk of climate action – which has become a buzz word in climate change narrative - we are talking about the impacts of climate change on people, and climate migration is one such example of how the daily life of people is directly affected by our changing environment.
- There is growing evidence that many people are directly migrating due to impacts of their environment. Some facts: 24.2 million people were newly displaced by sudden-onset disasters in 2016 within their own countries, and 4.5 million new displacements associated with disasters in 76 countries and territories in the first half of 2017. Slow onset events also displaced people, such as the drought in the Horn of Africa that displaced 700,000 people in Somalia and triggered cross-border forced migration to Ethiopia and Kenya.
- In addition, we also have strong evidence to indicate that migratory trends due to climate change and environmental degradation will continue to rise in the future.



- Promoting climate action – one of our objective at UNFCCC – means ensuring that we do not lose sight of the human dimension.

## 2. **IOM – UNFCCC partnership and collaboration**

- IOM has been an observer to UNFCCC and contributed to each climate conference (COP) since 2007 advocating for inclusion of migration and now working on the implementation and climate action follow up to Paris Agreement
- IOM has made alone or in partnership with other organizations over 40 technical submissions to UNFCCC since 2008 and organized over 30 events in relation to human mobility at climate conferences, and IOM's Director General attended in person five climate conferences, including the one (COP23) this month in Bonn - each time bringing in a vision and action to address the challenges posed by climate change in terms of human mobility.



- IOM has organized for UNFCCC the Technical meeting on Migration, Displacement and Human Mobility in the context of Action Area 6 of the initial two-year work plan of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage in 2016. This is a good example of how UNFCCC, IOM and other partners have focused on identifying good practices on migration and climate change to inform policy and practice.
- I strongly believe that the expertise of both organizations can be put to good use to support policy work across the board to address the impacts of climate migration.
- More concretely, joint programming can help address impacts of climate migration in countries most vulnerable to climate change through: i) production of primary data on and its analysis of the issues in terms of climate migration at the national level (national level assessments), ii) capacity-building and training for policymakers from relevant policy domains (on the basis of existing IOM's capacity building programme resources) and iii) hold policy dialogues at the national and regional level.
- Such an approach would be a valuable contribution to the Global Climate Action Agenda that will be a priority for the years to come.



- I also believe that IOM and UNFCCC should also strengthen communications actions that will provide visibility to climate migrant stories which can be brought to the COP24 – the next Climate Conference that will take place in Poland in 2018.

### **3. Human Dimension of Climate Change in the context of Global Compact for Migration**

- Paris agreement on climate change anchors migration issues in the climate policy agenda. Good progress has been made within the climate change policy community to recognize that migration is related to the adverse effects of climate change.
- It is time now for the migration policy community to recognize climate change and environmental degradation as drivers of migration so that safe and regular pathways for migration can be developed; we have an opportunity with the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration to do so. The future of climate migrants relies just as much on the effectiveness of the fight against climate change as on the availability of migration opportunities.



- The Executive Committee (Excom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage is working on climate and migration issues from two perspectives: i) the work of the Taskforce on Displacement, to be concluded at COP24 and ii) the work to be undertaken in its five-year regular work programme (2018-2022). This means that we have two concrete opportunities to work on global migration policy as it relates to climate change through the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.
- UNFCCC becoming an observer to IOM and through continued joint efforts – will enable integration of climate change and environmental factors in migration policy and practice.

I thank you for your attention and wish you all successful deliberations at this Council session.

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