

2017 INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY WEEK

SIDE-EVENT ON CLIMATE-INDUCED HUMAN MOBILITY USP Campus, Suva, Fiji

Introductory Remarks

By François Martel, Secretary General
Pacific Islands Development Forum

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all and welcome to this special side-event on climate-induced human mobility.

- When discussing one of the potential outcome of the CIVICUS International Civil Society Week together with the Secretary General on his first visit to Suva a year ago, we agreed that climate-induced displacement and migration was one of the major issue not only facing the Pacific Islands but having an impact globally.
- By then the New York Declaration on refugees and migrants had just been adopted in September 2016 by the UN General Assembly. Annex II of that Declaration set in motion a process of intergovernmental consultations and negotiations that will culminate in the adoption of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM) at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in 2018.
- This provides the opportunity for the global civil society movement to send a clear message on climate-induced migration to be tabled at the GCM Conference. Thus, the idea of this side-event, as part of the ICSW, was born.
- I was first introduced to the concept of climate migration while engaging with the Coalition of Atoll Nations on Climate Change (CANCC) as Tokelau Climate Change adviser. At its second High-

level meeting held in Kiribati in October 2015, the focus was entirely on climate-induced migration and migration with dignity, with the objective to ensure a strong voice for insertion in the language and action on loss and damage in the Paris Agreement to be negotiated later in that year.

- Human movement caused by environmental factors is not new. Natural and human-induced environmental disasters and slow-onset degradation have displaced people in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. Such movement is a normal part of adaptation to change. The '**newness**' of displacement triggered (at least in part) by climate change is :
 - its underlying anthropogenic basis
 - the large number of people thought to be susceptible to be displaced,
 - the relative speed with which climate change is to occur, which may hamper people's traditional adaptive patterns that historically were able to develop over time.
- The Asia-Pacific region has been identified as the most climate vulnerable region in the world. In 2014, 16.7 million people or 87% of the world's total internal displacement due to natural disasters took place in Asia and the Pacific. Displacement recorded in this region is the highest world over not just in absolute terms, but also relative to population size. These natural disasters, it is anticipated, will increase in intensity and frequency with climate change.
- The link between migration and climate change was brought into the climate change discussions for the first time during COP 16 in Cancun. This emphasized the importance of enhancing understanding, coordination and cooperation with regards to climate change induced migration, planned relocation and displacement at national, regional and international levels.
- The next important reference to mobility was then in COP 18 in Doha, which called for migration to be considered under the loss

and damage framework. While these references have provided a mandate for many international agencies to work on this topic, there still remains a lack of consensus, international collaboration and political will that prevents discussions on displacement and mobility in the context of climate change from being taken forward despite the New York Declaration adoption.

- The Suva Declaration on climate change adopted in September 2015 specifically highlighted that irreversible loss and damage caused by climate change goes beyond adaptation and that climate change is already resulting in forced displacement of island populations and the loss of land and territorial integrity and further highlight that such loss and damage results in breaches of social and economic rights.
- Much work has been done on assessment of impacts and perceptions of climate migration in the Pacific Islands over the last five years, and today, we will hear of experiences from across the Pacific Islands and the work of agencies intrinsically involved in displacement of people caused by climate change.
- I trust your discussions today will bring a consensus on a Global Civil Society declaration that can be championed at the Global Compact on Migration next year, overall this is an issue of climate justice and one that resonates strongly throughout the Pacific Islands.
- I wish you all the best in your deliberations and thank you for your participation and engagement in this process.

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