



UNHCR
The UN
Refugee Agency

UNHCR, THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

AN OVERVIEW



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Cover photo: Kenya / Floods in Dadaab / Children run into water after floods in IFO camp, Dadaab. © UNHCR / B. Bannon / December 2006

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FOREWORD

Of some 51.2 million ‘persons of concern’ to UNHCR (refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless persons), the vast majority are concentrated in ‘climate change hotspots’ around the world.

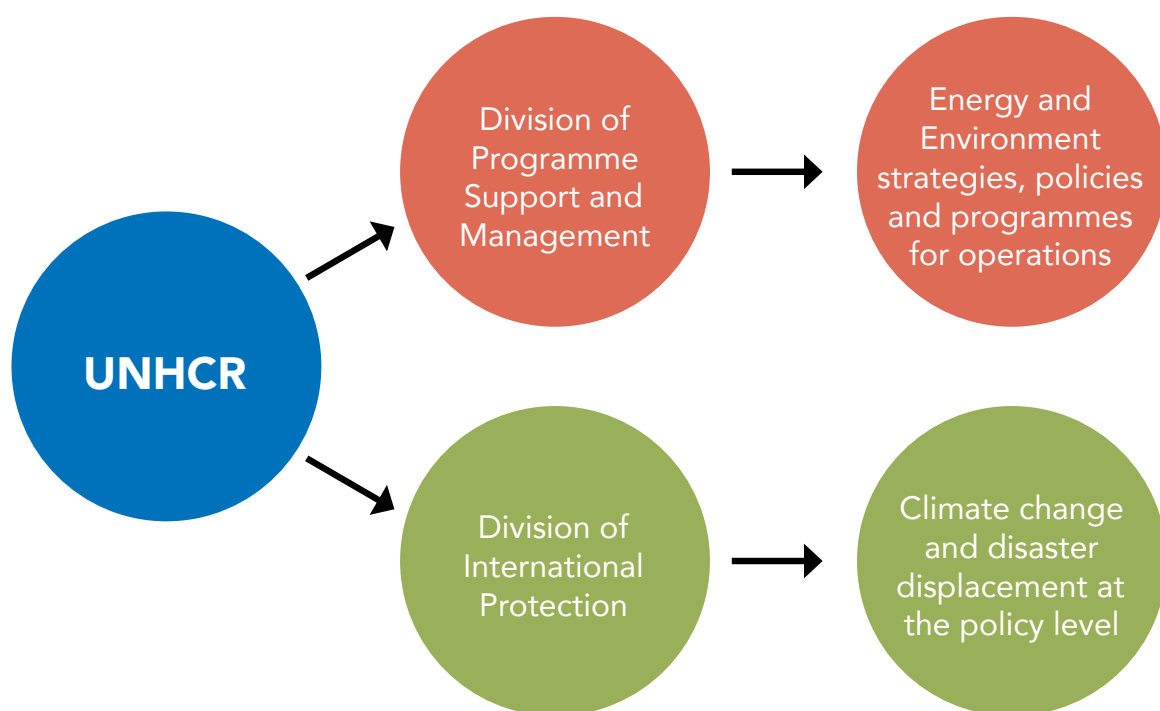
Beginning in the 1990s, UNHCR became increasingly aware of the environmental challenges associated with hosting a large population in a small area. Competition over scarce natural resources, such as firewood, water and grazing land, generated animosity and occasionally sparked friction or conflict between refugees and host communities. In the ensuing decades, UNHCR has set in place programmes and initiatives aimed at improving sustainable environmental management in order to reduce environmental degradation and enhance the resources available to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as host communities.

More recently, UNHCR has advocated for a more predictable and consistent approach to address the protection needs of people who may be displaced across borders owing to natural disasters, including those associated with the impacts of climate change. Popularly referred to as ‘climate refugees’ or ‘environmental refugees’, people who are displaced within their countries are protected as IDPs by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and by new conventions, such as the African Union Kampala IDP Convention. Those who cross borders would not normally qualify as refugees under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and there are at present no widely accepted principles or rules governing their entry and stay in another country.

Given the high demand for information on what the UN Refugee Agency is doing in these areas, the present publication on ‘UNHCR, the Environment and Climate Change’ provides an overview of UNHCR’s activities and initiatives relating to these issues.



Figure 1: UNHCR, the environment and climate change organigram



Kenya / Flooding in Dadaab
/ Some 78,000 refugees
in UNHCR's IFO and
Dagahaley camps were
affected by the flooding.
UNHCR oversees three
camps in the this region
of 160,000 mostly Somali
refugees.

© UNHCR / B. Bannon /
2011



1. UNHCR COMMITMENTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Humanitarian operations need to consider energy access and environmental management to enhance the well-being and protection of affected populations and the sustainability of operations. Most refugees rely on their surrounding natural environment for food, water, livelihoods, shelter and fuel. A large population can put substantial pressure on the surrounding resources, with consequences for persons dependent on the environment. Additionally, limited access to sustainable energy can have severe repercussions on the socio-economic situation and safety of refugees.

UNHCR has implemented measures to address these issues, including providing refugees with fuel-efficient stoves, solar street light, and solar lantern, and implementing environmental activities such as land rehabilitation. More recently, UNHCR's engagement in energy, including renewable energy, has expanded and is receiving increasing attention globally. UNHCR has developed its first Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) 2014 - 2018. This will allow UNHCR to have a more comprehensive response to energy issues, applying cutting-edge approaches, ideas and technologies.

1.1 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The tragedy of forced displacement must not be compounded by environmental degradation. Environmental management is a concern for UNHCR as it directly impacts on the well-being and livelihoods of refugees. It is also relevant in all phases of our work, from emergencies to rehabilitating the environment when a camp or settlement is closed.

UNHCR's sustainable environmental management programmes cannot be achieved without the active involvement of refugees or IDPs. To promote and guide these programmes, UNHCR advocates four principles of action:

1. **Integration** – Ensuring that energy and the environment feature in other related programmes or activities such as site planning, education or sanitation
2. **Prevention before cure** – Taking action as early as possible to minimize potentially large-scale challenges and irreversible effects
3. **Cost-effectiveness** – With limited resources at its disposal, UNHCR must always maximize the efficiency of its assistance programmes
4. **Local participation** – Involving refugees, IDPs and local communities in the development and management of energy programmes and environmental activities is fundamental to creating livelihood opportunities and managing natural resources in a sustainable manner

4 Principles of Action

1.1.1 NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

A number of UNHCR operations are confronted with the consequences of deforestation, particularly owing to droughts and flash floods. These operations include but are not limited to Chad, Ethiopia, Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Nepal, and Thailand. UNHCR is collaborating with Governments and partners to promote reforestation and sustainable agriculture in refugee-hosting areas facing deforestation.

UNHCR gives priority to environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management in its field operations during a camp's existence and following its closure by:

- **Strengthening** the management and conservation of natural resources, through reforestation, rehabilitation, and land management;
- **Promoting** sustainable land use, agriculture, and livestock management, leading to more harmonious coexistence with the host community and improved livelihoods;
- **Establishing** Community Environmental Action Plans (CEAPs) to improve environmental management in camps and surrounding areas.

UNHCR is supporting the planting and management of over 10 million trees per year globally. Some of the forests thus established are already providing construction materials, firewood and other resources for the benefit of both displaced people and host communities.

1.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to maximize positive impacts, and ensure that interventions are appropriate, effective and cost-efficient, UNHCR promotes the use of environmental management tools in refugee operations, including environmental impact assessments and monitoring.

UNHCR and CARE International developed in 2005 the Framework for Assessing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Environment in refugee-related operations (FRAME).¹ Planned and tested with partners in many countries, FRAME has produced tools and guidelines that help managers and field practitioners address environmental issues and concerns, from contingency planning to when camps are closed and rehabilitated. To date, it has been applied in refugee, IDP and returnee situations, in post-conflict and post-disaster situations, primarily in Africa and Asia.

Impact assessments, monitoring and evaluation are also taken into account in specific programs. For example, the SAFE Strategy advocates for appropriate measurement to design context-specific energy and reforestation programmes. Additionally, in 2014-2015 a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for natural resources management and energy activities will be developed and UNHCR and partner staff trained to use it.

1.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

In order to build the capacity of UNHCR staff, implementing partners and government counterparts, UNHCR has developed and conducted a number of national and regional environmental management and energy learning workshops. By including counterparts from government departments, such training strengthens local capacity and sustainability.

To place environmental management at the center of any humanitarian response, in 2014-2015, two workshops on SAFE and mainstreaming environmental management into humanitarian operations will be delivered.

Similarly, through Community Environmental Management Plans (CEAPs), UNHCR will work with refugees, IDPs and host communities to build awareness on environmental issues. Working closely with these communities will give UNHCR a greater understanding of their environmental challenges. This will enable the communities to support the conception, design and implementation of such interventions.

1.1.4 PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR's activities and programmes are most often based on collaboration with, and support from, the appropriate government agency and, in most field operations, a lead implementing partner.

UNHCR is strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies and UN coordination mechanisms, such as the UN's Delivering as One initiative, in the area of environmental management. UNHCR is also collaborating with the private sector, NGOs and academia to support innovation in energy access, environmental management, and in adaptation to climate change.

These partnerships have helped strengthen the capacity of UNHCR and partners to respond more effectively to identified needs.

¹ To learn more on FRAME, please visit : <http://www.unhcr.org/4a97d1039.html>

1.1.5 GUIDELINES ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

UNHCR regularly updates and disseminates its Environmental Guidelines and other guidance on environmentally sustainable operations, “green” procurement and eco-friendly consumption and behaviour.

The **UNHCR Environmental Guidelines** developed in 2005 describe the basis for incorporating environmental factors into specific UNHCR guidelines and programmes. Environmental issues are cross-sectoral by nature, and environmental considerations have to be introduced in a consistent and coordinated way into all relevant sectoral activities.²

UNHCR
Environmental
Guidelines

Building upon the 1997 Environmentally Friendlier Procurement Guidelines, UNHCR began implementing a **Green Procurement Policy** in 2012. The policy aims to ensure that social and environmental factors are combined with financial considerations when making purchasing decisions. “Environmental considerations form part of the evaluation and selection criteria, which could cover, depending on goods and services to be purchased, their manufacture, transport, packaging, use and disposal. UNHCR applies these guidelines not only to purchases, whether by UNHCR or implementing partners, but also to in-kind donations.”³

Green
Procurement
Policy

1.2 SAFE ACCESS TO FUEL AND ENERGY (SAFE)

Safe and reliable access to energy for cooking, lighting, and powering, is a basic need for everyone, but for many refugees, cooking a meal or having light at night is a daily struggle. Without light, refugees cannot walk around safely in the evening and are more likely to be exposed to safety risks such as sexual and gender-based violence. The lack of a sustainable source of energy also results in women spending hours searching for firewood instead of engaging in livelihood, educational, social and other activities. Children who accompany their mothers cannot attend school. Additionally, the use of already scarce resources can result in environmental degradation and tension between refugees, IDPs and host communities⁴. Through the SAFE Strategy, UNHCR aims to ensure that all refugees are able to satisfy their energy needs for cooking and lighting in a safe and sustainable manner, without fear or risk to their health, well-being and personal security. Given the need to address SAFE in humanitarian operations, and its cross-cutting nature, the SAFE Strategy gives guidance to UNHCR in order to approach energy challenges in a comprehensive manner, using cutting-edge technologies and ideas.

The SAFE Strategy will be rolled out in five countries in 2014, with more countries added from 2015 – 2018. Innovative ideas from the global energy sector will be harnessed and translated into humanitarian settings. Current partnerships will be strengthened, and new ones, particularly with academic institutions and the private sector, will be forged.

² UNHCR's Environmental Guidelines, 2005, available at: <http://goo.gl/yEywky> environmental guidelines

³ UNHCR's Green Procurement Policy, available at: http://www.cinu.org.mx/negocios/registro_acnur.pdf

⁴ UNHCR Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE), 2014 – 2018, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/energystrategy>

Sudan / IDPs / Aicha uses a fuel efficiency stove at the UNHCR center for women in Ryad camp, El Geneina, West Darfur. After being trained by UNHCR, she is now herself the official trainer on how to use fuel efficiency stoves. Women say that the stoves reduce the use of wood by 40%. “I don’t go outside of the camp as much to collect wood” says Aicha who has been attacked in the past while venturing outside of her settlement. Many women were/are beaten up and raped while venturing outside of the camps to collect wood. The stoves are made of donkey dung, mud and water.

© UNHCR / H. Caux / 2011



1.2.1 ETHANOL FOR COOKING IN ETHIOPIA

Since January 2006, the Gaia Association in Ethiopia has been an implementing partner working to supply ethanol stoves to Somali refugees in Kebribeyah refugee camp, in the Jijiga region of Ethiopia. By the end of 2007, the entire camp, around 2,000 families received ethanol stoves. In mid-2008, the project was scaled up to Awbare refugee camp in Jijiga, where currently around 1,844 households benefit from ethanol stoves.

The stoves burn without smoke or soot, are easy to use, highly efficient and affordable to run. They are stable and the fuel is stored safely in a non-spill tank, limiting the risk of fire. They are portable, so refugee women can choose to cook wherever they like inside their homes or even outside. The ethanol is procured from a local sugar factory and transported to Kebribeyah and Awbare for distribution to refugees, who receive ethanol based on their family size.

This project has reduced firewood collection, increased security for women and children, improved indoor air quality in refugee homes, freed up time for children to attend school, and has had a positive impact on the natural environment surrounding the camps.

1.2.2 FUEL EFFICIENT STOVES IN CHAD AND IN REFUGEE CAMPS

In 2013, Chad received funding for energy as part of the UNHCR **Light Years Ahead initiative**. With these funds, the Chad operation was able to procure solar street lights, solar lanterns and set up workshops to produce Afrah stoves. The Afrah stoves are locally made fuel-efficient stoves, made by and distributed to Sudanese refugees in east Chad.

The production of these stoves creates livelihood opportunities for refugees who fabricate the stoves, with 38 refugees already trained and employed in this field. Members of the host community are also taking part in this activity. The stoves can reduce protection and safety risks associated with firewood collection. Additionally, this reduces deforestation, preserving the natural resources used for other livelihood opportunities for both the refugee and host communities.

Philippines / Super Typhoon Haiyan / Typhoon survivor Kevin Pinapiel, 9, is seen with his family inside their bunkhouse using solar lantern in Motocross village in storm-hit city of Tacloban in the central Philippines. The UN refugee agency says six months after the deadly storm, humanitarian situation remains stable due to close coordination between the Philippine government and international actors that guaranteed a steady stream of assistance to the affected and most vulnerable.

© UNHCR / J.Maitem / May 2014



1.2.3 THE IKEA FOUNDATION: BRIGHTER LIVES FOR REFUGEES

The IKEA Foundation has been supporting the work UNHCR to provide sustainable access to renewable energy for refugees. The **Brighter Lives for Refugees** campaign ran in IKEA stores globally from February to March 2014. For every IKEA LEDARE light bulb purchased during the campaign, the IKEA Foundation donated €1 to UNHCR. These funds are being used to enhance renewable energy and primary education in UNHCR refugee camps in Ethiopia, Chad, Bangladesh and Jordan.

1.2.4 CARBON FINANCING IN RWANDA

In October 2013, UNHCR engaged in its first carbon financing venture with a climate protection organization in Rwanda. This agreement will enable the distribution of fuel-efficient stoves to refugees in Rwanda, with the aim of addressing the cross-cutting impacts that using harmful cooking fuels and inefficient open fires have on the well-being and protection of refugees.

As of January 2014, around 4,000 fuel-efficient stoves had been distributed to refugees in Rwanda, with about 7,000 more soon to be distributed. The carbon credits generated through this scheme will be used to purchase additional fuel-efficient stoves for refugees in Rwanda, and help UNHCR protect their well-being and rights.

Through the use of carbon reduction certificates, the carbon agreement will support energy access for refugees in Rwanda while also working to mitigate the carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

Philippines / Tanauan /
Typhoon Hayian / Young
boys collecting pieces of
lumber they can use to
rebuild their house in
Tanauan, Leyte.

© UNHCR / R. Rocamora
/ 2011



2. CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTERS: UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE HUMAN MOBILITY DIMENSION

2.1 WHY IS UNHCR INVOLVED?

Rajendra K. Pachauri,
Chairperson,
Intergovernmental Panel
on Climate Change
(IPCC)

*"Climate change will force people into increasing
poverty and displacement, exacerbating the
factors that lead to conflict."*

2.1.1 CLIMATE CHANGE AS A DRIVER OF HUMAN MOBILITY

"Climate change is projected to increase the displacement of people throughout this century. The risk of displacement increases when populations who lack the resources to migrate experience higher exposure to extreme weather events, in both rural and urban areas, particularly in low-income developing countries. Changes in migration patterns can be responses to both extreme weather events and longer-term climate variability and change, and migration can also be an effective adaptation strategy".⁵

IPCC, 2014

No single international agency has the mandate to deal with populations displaced on account of disasters and the impacts of climate change. As a rights-based and protection agency, UNHCR's concern relates to the enjoyment of human rights by people relocated or displaced by the effects of disasters and climate change, either within their own borders or across borders. UNHCR is increasingly involved in responding to large-scale disasters considered Level 3 emergencies by the UN system. It recently played the protection lead in response to 2013 Philippines Typhoon Haiyan, which illustrates of the type of natural disaster scenarios that will become more frequent as climate change begins to bite hard.

2.1.2 CLIMATE CHANGE AS A DRIVER OF CONFLICTS

The IPCC's March 2014 report also finds that "climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts in the form of civil war and inter-group violence by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks. Multiple lines of evidence relate climate variability to these forms of conflict".⁶ There is a case for refugee protection in situations where harmful action or inaction by a Government in dealing with climate related events is related to one or more of the Refugee Convention grounds (such as denial of humanitarian assistance to a minority group) and could, as a result, be considered *persecution*.

On the other hand, it is generally difficult to single out climatic and environmental factors as the sole, unilateral driver of population movements. As an example, the major influx of Somalis into Kenya in 2012 and 2013 was motivated as much by the drought and famine affecting Somalia as by the death and disruption at the hands of Al Shabab and armed groups. "The drought made the conflict worse. Everyone became afraid of everyone. Some raiders came and took away the little food we had raised on our farm. Now we are in a very hard time: the people at home face conflict and famine. They are starving. If we could go back, we would have only dry land and death to greet us" said a pastoralist from Somalia in Shedr Camp, Ethiopia.⁷ This indicates that countries already experiencing conflict may be triply hit, rendering both the humanitarian needs and responses in such situations even more complex.

Individuals and communities displaced by disasters and climate change and those displaced by conflicts often experience similar trauma and deprivation. They may have protection needs and vulnerabilities comparable to those whose flight is provoked by armed violence or human rights abuses.

⁵ Climate change is widely expected to compound a number of existing trends (e.g. food insecurity and water scarcity) and exacerbate the vulnerability of millions around the globe. According to the IPCC's Working Group II Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report, released in March 2014: IPCC 5AR, WG2, Volume 1, Chapter 12, (2014), available at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>

⁶ Idem.

⁷ T. Afifi, R. Govil, P. Sakdapolrak and K. Warner, *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Human Mobility: Perspectives of Refugees from the East and Horn of Africa*, UNHCR and UNU-EHS, No. 1, June 2012, p.46 <http://goo.gl/OpqOei>

Ethiopia/ Somali refugees
/ Somali refugee water
seedling of nitrogen
enriching tree a the
nursery near Hilaweyn
refugee camp 15 June
2012. With the support
of UNHCR / , Pastoralist
Welfare Organization
assists refugees and
local population to grow
vegetables and animal feed
along river bank near the
camp.

© UNHCR / J. Ose / 2012



2.2 HOW IS UNHCR INVOLVED?

“Providing support is a humanitarian imperative. But it is also our common interest. [...] If we fail to find sustainable solutions for displaced populations, we will be creating the conditions in which further breaches of international peace and security are certain to take place.”

Antonio Guterres,
UN High Commissioner
for Refugees, United
Nations Security Council

2.2.1 SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A ‘PROTECTION AGENDA’ FOR CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

When people cross borders in the context of disasters and climate change, there is a legal gap regarding their protection. The 1951 Refugee Convention speaks in terms of “a well-founded fear of persecution” on the basis of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and political opinion. Thus the Convention does not normally apply to the situation of persons displaced across borders by disasters and climate change.

THE NANSEN INITIATIVE ON DISASTER-INDUCED CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

Norway and Switzerland, joined by Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Kenya, Mexico, and the Philippines, launched the Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement during UNHCR’s Executive Committee in October 2012. The Initiative fulfils ministerial pledges made in December 2011, as part of commemoration by UN Member States of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, “to cooperate with interested states, UNHCR and other relevant actors with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people.”

The objectives of the Nansen Initiative are not to draft a convention or a soft-law instrument, but rather to build consensus among interested governments on key principles and elements regarding the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and to set a protection agenda for future action at domestic, regional and international levels that will feed into formal existing processes at domestic, regional and international levels.

THE NANSEN INITIATIVE

Given the magnitude and breadth of the issues involved, there is a need for a collaborative approach based on principles of international cooperation and burden- and responsibility-sharing. UNHCR’s expertise on the protection dimensions of displacement is well recognized. UNHCR is an observer in the Steering Group of the Nansen Initiative, which initiates, hosts, oversees and steers the process, and is an active member of the Nansen Consultative Committee, which informs the process through research and expertise in a range of disciplines. UNHCR is also actively supporting the Nansen Initiative through a European Union grant that is shared with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC) and with the co-funding of Switzerland and Norway.

⁸ For additional information regarding the Nansen Initiative, visit <http://www.nanseninitiative.org>

2.2.2 DISASTERS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

It is widely agreed that the vast majority of people displaced by disasters and the impacts of climate change will be IDPs. As defined by the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, IDPs are individuals or groups of people “who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence [...] and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.”⁹ IDPs – whether they return to their homes, settle elsewhere in the country, or try to integrate locally where they are displaced – usually face continuing problems and risks, and require support beyond the acute crisis period of a disaster. Achieving a durable solution is therefore a gradual and complex process requiring timely and coordinated efforts to address humanitarian, development and human rights concerns, including measures to prepare for or prevent further displacement.¹⁰

Governments are primarily responsible for the people displaced within their borders. When they lack resources to respond, humanitarian and international solidarity are essential.

The primary mechanism for the coordination of humanitarian assistance for IDPs among relevant international United Nations (UN) and non-UN agencies is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)’s cluster approach. Under the ‘cluster approach’ UNHCR plays a lead role in overseeing the protection and shelter needs of conflict-generated IDPs. UNHCR consults with UNICEF and OHCHR regarding which agency is best placed in a particular context to assume responsibility for the protection of disaster-generated IDPs.

When a disaster strikes, UNHCR is often requested by the affected country – especially when it is already hosting refugees – to support the authorities and people as a sign of solidarity, given UNHCR’s expertise and established presence, as well as in-country programme and relief items. UNHCR played a major role in protection of the populations affected by, among others, droughts in Somalia in 2011 and 2012, floods in Pakistan between 2010 and 2012, storms and flooding in Myanmar in 2013, and typhoons in the Philippines (Washi/Sendong in 2011/2012 and Haiyan/Yolanda in 2013).¹¹

CLUSTER	CLUSTER LEAD
1. Logistics	World Food Programme
2. Emergency telecommunications	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs- OCHA (Process Owner); UNICEF (Common Data Services); WFP (Common Security Telecommunications Services)
3. Camp coordination and management	UNHCR for conflict-generated IDPs IOM for natural disaster-generated IDPs
4. Emergency shelter	International Federation of Red Cross/Crescent (IFRC)
5. Health	World Health Organization
6. Nutrition	UNICEF
7. Water, sanitation and hygiene	UNICEF
8. Early recovery	UNDP
9. Protection	UNHCR , for conflict-generated IDPs; UNHCR , UNICEF, and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for natural disaster-generated IDPs

⁹ See the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/43ce1cff2.html>

¹⁰ IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, April 2010, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/50f94cd49.html>

¹¹ As an example, UNHCR has reached nearly half a million Typhoon Haiyan survivors with vital supplies that include 45,000 plastic sheets and 10,000 solar lanterns. UNHCR continues to assist the most vulnerable typhoon survivors, in particular indigenous peoples like the Badjao, more information available at <http://www.unhcr.org/52f0c8e36.html>

2.3 UNHCR'S INVOLVEMENT IN SETTING THE AGENDA (2008-2014)

2.3.1 IASC TASK FORCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE (2008)

In June 2008, the IASC established a Task Force on Climate Change. UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and a number of like-minded partners were instrumental in advocating for cross-border displacement to be addressed in this context. The heads of key humanitarian agencies made joint submissions as “a coordinated signal” to States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) about the links between human mobility and climate change and disasters and the willingness of specialized agencies to support them in crafting effective responses.

2008

2.3.2 UNFCCC CANCÚN DECISION (2010)

These efforts led to the adoption of Paragraph 14 (f) of Decision 1 CP/16 of the COP 16 held in Cancún in 2010. Paragraph 14 (f) invites all States parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework by undertaking, inter alia,

2010

“[m]easures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate at the national, regional and international levels.”

Cancún,
Paragraph 14 (f) of
Decision 1 CP/16

This landmark decision provides a basis for further action to address human mobility prompted by disasters and climate change, and offers the basis for ‘adaptation funding’ to develop strategies on migration, displacement and planned relocation.

2.3.3 THE BELLAGIO ROUNDTABLE AND THE NANSEN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISPLACEMENT (2011)

In February 2011 States, UNHCR and other participants in the Bellagio Roundtable on Climate Change and Displacement emphasized the need to formulate a ‘global guiding framework’ on displacement relating to climate change to apply to situations of external displacement other than those covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention, especially displacement resulting from sudden-onset disasters.

2011

In June 2011, Norway’s Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement generated 10 ‘Nansen Principles’. These principles include express recognition that “a more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters.”¹²

2.3.4 THE NANSEN INITIATIVE ON DISASTERS AND CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT (2012)

The Nansen Initiative on disasters and cross-border displacement was formally launched through the Norwegian-Swiss pledge “to cooperate with interested states, UNHCR and other relevant actors with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of such cross border movements at relevant regional and sub-regional levels, identifying best practices and developing consensus on how best to assist and protect the affected people.”¹³ Switzerland and Norway have been joined in the Nansen Steering Committee by Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Kenya, Mexico and the Philippines.

2012

¹² The Nansen Conference, 2011, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ea969729.pdf>

¹³ Launch of the Nansen Initiative, 2012, available at: <http://nanseninitiative.org/launch-nansen-initiative>

2.3.5 THE ADVISORY GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN MOBILITY AND THE UNFCCC PROCESS (2013-2014)

To prepare for UNFCCC - COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013, UNHCR joined forces with a number of agencies to launch an Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility.

The Advisory Group aims at leveraging evidence and enhancing knowledge and understanding of human mobility prompted by climate change.

The Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, composed of a number of organizations/institutions – UNHCR, IOM, NRC/IDMC, UNU, UNDP, ILO, OHCHR, Sciences Po (CERI) and Refugees International – considers that close cooperation in framing and communicating issues surrounding human mobility in response to climate change is the most effective way to inform policy-making.

The Group puts forward official submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat, organizes side events and provides technical support to Parties to the UNFCCC process on evidence-based, innovative new tools and guidance on the Loss and Damage mechanism, on National Adaptation Plans and on the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

2.3.6 THE WORKING GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE (WGCC)

UNHCR is participating to the Working Group on Climate Change (WGCC), an inter-agency mechanism under the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB).

Through the CEB HLCP WGCC, UNHCR:

- **Advises** HLCP WGCC on emerging strategic issues and priorities for action on climate change related human mobility;
- **Develops** and articulate positions on climate change related human mobility, including through joint communication and advocacy material;
- **Coordinates** with other UN agencies on engagement in the UNFCCC COPs and other relevant climate-related processes and fora.

2.3.7 SANREMO CONSULTATION ON PLANNED RELOCATION (2014)

UNHCR, together with the Brookings Institution and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, organized a consultation on *Planned relocation, disasters and climate change: Consolidating good practices and preparing for the future* on 12-14 March 2014 in Sanremo, Italy, supported with a grant from the European Union and co-funding from Norway and Switzerland. The consultation examined the complex issue of planned relocations made necessary by sudden-onset disasters, acute environmental degradation, and the longer-term effects of climate change. The consultation brought together 43 experts from a range of areas (adaptation, development, development-induced displacement and resettlement, disaster risk management, civil protection, environment and climate change, humanitarian assistance and human rights) from 21 countries, drawn from governments, international and non-governmental organizations and academia.

While the consultation did generate a set of recommendations and some guidance on planned relocation, it fell short of developing a 'how-to guide' on planned relocation for States.

Following this consultation, UNHCR contributed to a joint publication on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) that was released for the June 2014 UNFCCC session. UNHCR's chapter situates planned relocation in the context of adaptation to climate change and calls for consideration of planned relocation within National Adaptation Plans.¹⁴

UNHCR, the Brookings Institution and ISIM will continue their cooperation to move the discussion forward on the issue of planned relocation in the context of disasters and climate change.

¹⁴ Joint policy brief between the United Nations University, Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and the Nansen Initiative <http://ehs.unu.edu/file/get/11800.pdf>

