Input to the Sendai Framework Mid-Term Review “Disaster Displacement and Disaster Risk Reduction” submitted by the PDD Secretariat on 15 November 2022

I. Background

The 2019 – 2023 strategy of the Platform on Disaster Displacement recognizes that forced displacement in the context of disasters, including from the adverse effects of climate change (disaster displacement), is a reality and among the biggest humanitarian and development challenges facing States and the international community in the 21st century.

The PDD has identified as its overall objective 2019 – 2023 to support States and other stakeholders to strengthen the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, and to prevent or reduce disaster displacement risks in countries of origin and has four strategic priorities:

I. Support integrated implementation of global policy frameworks on human mobility, climate change action and disaster risk reduction that are relevant for disaster displaced persons;
II. Promote policy and normative development to address gaps in the protection of persons at risk of displacement or displaced across borders
III. Facilitate exchange of knowledge and strengthen capacity at the national and regional levels to implement effective practices and instruments that can prevent, reduce and address disaster displacement
IV. Strengthen evidence and data on disaster displacement and its impacts.

The PDD has identified the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) as one of its three global policy frameworks for engagement, besides the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees as well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other outcomes of subsidiary bodies of UNFCCC, including the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) and its Task Force on Displacement (TFD).

The PDD seeks to support relevant review, monitoring and stocktaking mechanisms, as appropriate, including the Sendai Framework Midterm-Review.

Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction as well as other humanitarian and development efforts are often interdependent. The PDD promotes a coherent approach in implementing these efforts to generate more effective outcomes and strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of countries and communities (e.g. development of integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies and plans addressing human mobility challenges, at the national level).

The following sections provide input elaborated by the PDD Secretariat in the format of a Policy Brief and Key Messages, with support from its Steering Group and Advisory Committee, and put forward at the Global Platform for DRR in 2022 (GP22). It has been slightly updated to include more recent resources and is written with the intention to give UNDRR the necessary elements and references to ensure that displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change is reflected appropriately in the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework.
It is important to recognize that disasters affect people in different ways and that one of them is displacement. Disaster displacement has devastating impacts on individuals and communities, especially the most vulnerable. There is a role for DRR, and the implementation of and follow-up to the Sendai Framework, to ensure that these impacts are prevented, reduced and addressed, in line with efforts undertaken by Climate Change and Human Mobility Actors to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, including displacement, in the context of disasters and climate change.

II. Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change

Millions of people are displaced in the context of disasters around the world, every year. In 2021 alone, 23.7 million new displacements were related to disasters, according to estimates by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Disaster displacement is multi-causal and driven by political, social, demographic, and environmental factors, including land degradation and unsustainable urbanization, among others. It occurs in the context of earthquakes and other geophysical hazards or is linked to extreme weather events, such as floods, storms and drought. Weather-related events were responsible for 94 per cent of all disaster displacement recorded in 2021.

The adverse effects of climate change are already increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards and undermining resilience. Climate change has contributed to almost a doubling of disaster events over the past two decades. As more people become exposed and are vulnerable to the impacts of such hazards, disaster displacement risk is likely to continue to increase. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects human mobility patterns will change in response to extreme weather events and climate variability, including slow-onset events and processes such as drought and sea level rise. The 2022 IPCC Working Group II Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report has “high confidence” that, “in the mid- to long-term, displacement will increase with intensification of heavy precipitation and associated flooding, tropical cyclones, drought and, increasingly, sea level rise”.

Moving away from risk areas can save lives. Pre-emptive evacuations are therefore a key component of disaster management. Population movements, however, need to be well-managed. Disaster displacement can have devastating social, economic, health and psychological impacts on individuals and communities, and affect the effective enjoyment of their human rights. Poorly anticipated, prepared for and managed displacement and its related impacts exacerbate pre-existing conditions of vulnerability, severely affecting children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, traditional communities and people already marginalized. The needs and conditions of displaced persons may also be compounded by other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity and increasing water scarcity.

Disaster displacement raises multiple protection concerns, undermines development gains, affects human rights and human security, across the globe. Disproportionate impacts are often borne more strongly by least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).

III. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

The Sendai Framework outlines seven targets for action to prevent and reduce disaster risk. It recognizes disaster displacement as an important concern for people-centred disaster risk reduction (DRR) and provides many opportunities for DRR policy and practice to reduce risk and address displacement in the
context of disasters and climate change. In particular:

Target B of the Sendai Framework aims to “substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030”, which includes those who have been injured, suffered damage to their livelihoods or “who were evacuated, displaced, and relocated.”

Reaching Target E of the Sendai Framework can contribute to this goal. It aims to “substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020”, and it is critical that countries include provisions to address human mobility challenges in disaster and climate change contexts in their DRR strategies.

Risk assessment and planning is critical to reduce risk and address displacement. Target G aims to “substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments by 2030.” Achieving Target G will enable better preparedness and the effective use of measures such as pre-emptive evacuations to save lives.

Currently, no displacement-related metric is included among the indicators that countries use to monitor progress against the risk reduction objectives of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Governments should include displacement in their national DRR targets and indicators to measure their progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, and ensure these are aligned with sustainable development and climate change planning processes and reporting.

IV. National and regional DRR strategies and practice

DRR strategies and practice play an important role in preventing and reducing risks associated with disaster displacement, strengthening resilience, and addressing the protection needs of people already displaced or at risk of being displaced. They should promote human-rights based approaches to disaster displacement and build coherence and partnerships across related policy areas, contributing to an effective use of knowledge and resources across silos. Furthermore, the inclusion and meaningful participation of people at risk of displacement and those already displaced, in planning, response and recovery, is essential to better plan for potential displacement, ensure the effective achievement of solutions and to avoid the creation of further risk. Inclusion and participation is essential at all times, before, during and after displacement, with due attention to age, gender and diversity considerations.

There exist many initiatives and effective practices at the national and regional levels that can be shared between actors to learn from each other. Noteworthy examples of policy development in recent years include:

Bangladesh: National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management (2021)

Fiji: Displacement Guidelines – In the Context of Climate Change and Disasters (2020)

Fiji: Planned Relocation Guidelines – A framework to undertake climate change related relocation (2018)

Vanuatu: National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement (2018)

The Nansen Initiative Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change compiled several recommendations on how to strengthen the management of disaster displacement risk. Building on this work and through close partnerships, PDD, UNDRR, IOM,
the Norwegian Refugee Council, and other partners, have

a) Mapped national and regional DRR strategies, analyzing the extent to which they include disaster displacement and human mobility provisions (Yonetani, M. 2018), including with a specific focus on the IGAD region (Nyandiko, N. & Freeman, R. 2020).

b) Developed Words into Action Guidelines that support States to include disaster displacement provisions in their DRR policies and strategies (UNDRR, 2019), as well as a supporting Checklist (NRC, 2020) and eLearning.

c) Taken stock of available disaster displacement data gaps, challenges and opportunities (IDMC, 2019); and are developing a set of recommendations for recording the scale of displacement at national level and assessing impacts and future risk which will incorporate the use of both scientific research techniques and community risk assessment methods.

d) Mapped the use of planned relocation to establish an evidence base on planned relocation cases and offer insights for policy and practice on characteristics, approaches to implementation and associated challenges of planned relocation as a risk reduction measure (Bower, E. & Weerasinghe, S. 2021; IOM 2022).

In 2022, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) are working together in partnership with key governmental and non-governmental counterparts to develop a tested set of standard displacement-related metrics and indicators which will strengthen the ability of DRR actors to integrate displacement in their work.

V. Addressing disaster displacement in a coherent manner across relevant policy areas

Effective approaches to addressing disaster displacement through the Sendai Framework will require coherence with and partnerships across related policy areas, including

Communities and societies are already suffering losses and damages, including displacement. The need to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change is recognized as a priority by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement. It is addressed in particular through the work of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) acknowledges the importance of DRR in minimizing the drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin in the context of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation.

Objective 2 of the GCM recommends to, inter alia, “integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies and promote cooperation with neighbouring and other relevant countries to prepare for early warning, contingency planning, stockpiling, coordination mechanisms, evacuation planning, reception and assistance arrangements, and public information.”

Disaster displacement is also recognized as a key human rights, humanitarian and development challenge by the Human Rights Council, Human Rights Treaty Bodies, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development, the Agenda for Humanity, the New Urban Agenda and the Global Compact on Refugees. The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement has affirmed the need to work across development, peace, climate change adaptation and DRR communities to address internal displacement.

To reduce and minimize risks related to displacement and to achieve better outcomes for disaster displaced persons worldwide, it is important for these global agendas and frameworks to guide regional and national policies in a coherent manner, and give support to action at the local level.

VI. Key Messages as Input to the Sendai Framework Midterm-Review

Disasters affect people in many ways. Disaster displacement is one of them. States and other stakeholders should invest in disaster risk reduction, assess potential disaster displacement and prepare for movement in a way that minimizes associated risk.

These efforts should be coherent with wider climate action, human mobility, human rights, humanitarian and development efforts to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of people at risk of displacement, address the protection needs of displaced people and achieve durable solutions to displacement.

States and other stakeholders are called upon to:

1. Include provisions to address disaster displacement and other forms of human mobility in a coherent way in local, national and regional DRR policies and strategies.

2. Work across silos and strengthen governance to foster the effective and coherent implementation of these policies and strategies in line with relevant global, regional and national policy frameworks and strategies on climate change action, development, humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management and refugee protection, among others.

3. Strengthen efforts to understand risks related to disaster displacement, collect disaggregated displacement data, and use such information when reporting on and monitoring implementation of progress on DRR, and when developing contingency, preparedness, response and recovery plans.

4. Build the capacity of local, national and regional stakeholders to address disaster displacement through the application of effective practices and existing learning, and ensure the allocation of funding, including at the local level.

5. Ensure the inclusion and meaningful participation of people and groups displaced or at risk of displacement as well as host communities in DRR planning and response, with due attention to age, gender and diversity considerations.

States and other stakeholders could commit to, inter alia:

A. Strengthen governance i.a. through the following actions:
   i. Update or develop local, national and regional DRR strategies and policies with provisions on disaster displacement and human mobility, building on efforts made to achieve Target E.
   ii. Ensure that national DRR policies and strategies are coherent with policies and strategies on climate change action, development, humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights,
migration management, refugee protection, etc.

iii. Implement the Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster Displacement, use the accompanying Checklist, and build capacity through the eLearning course and other training.

iv. Designate a governmental focal point on disaster displacement to facilitate information-sharing and, as relevant, coordination within and across ministries, between the local and national level, and with civil society, affected communities and other partners.

v. Allocate funding and ensure appropriate human resources, for the implementation of these measures into disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery as well as capacity building and training, including at the local level.

vi. Scale up the application and sharing of effective practices and learning, including the use of risk assessments, early warning systems and other preparedness measures, to ensure that disaster displacement is addressed and related risk is reduced, in line with the Sendai Framework.

B. Improve the evidence base on disaster displacement and associated risk by:

i. improving disaster displacement data collection, including through disaggregating data and by monitoring all stages of displacement in line with data protection standards; and

ii. developing national targets and indicators on new and existing disaster displacement, for national reporting and to the Sendai Framework Monitor, in line with the SDGs; and

iii. enhancing access to data and evidence on risks related to disaster displacement and other forms of human mobility, including through the development of disaster displacement risk models and the inclusion of the views and experiences of affected communities.

VII. Documents to consult

Bower, E., Weerasinghe, S. 2021. Leaving Place, Restoring Home: Enhancing the evidence base on planned relocation cases in the context of hazards, disasters and climate change.


IDMC, 2019. Disaster displacement - a global review.


IDMC, 2022. Disaster Displacement in Asia and the Pacific.


IOM, IDMC, 2022. Displacement Indicators for DRR. Analysis of existing methodologies, research and datasets.


Norwegian Refugee Council, Platform on Disaster Displacement, UNDRR, 2020. eLearning on “Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience.”

Nyandiko, N., Freeman, R. 2020. Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Development Policies, and their Consideration of Disaster Displacement and Human Mobility in the IGAD Region.

Platform on Disaster Displacement, 2022. Key Messages for COP27.

Platform on Disaster Displacement, OHCHR, 2018. The slow onset effects of Climate Change and Human Rights Protection for cross-border migrants.

Platform on Disaster Displacement, IOM, IDMC, 2022. 15 Observations on Disaster Displacement as Loss and Damage.


UNHCR, 2020. Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters.


UNDRR, 2019. Words into Action Guidelines on “Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience.”


UNDRR, 2021. Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action 2.0.


Yonetani, M. 2018. Mapping the Baseline - To what extent are displacement and other forms of human mobility integrated in national and regional disaster risk reduction strategies?

VIII. About the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)

The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) is a State-led initiative. Its objective is to support States and other stakeholders to strengthen the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, and to prevent or reduce disaster displacement risks in countries of origin. After Germany, Bangladesh, France and Fiji, the European Union currently chairs the PDD with Kenya as Vice-Chair. The PDD works across human mobility, DRR, climate change, humanitarian, development, human rights and other policy areas to support States and other stakeholders in implementing the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, which was endorsed by more than 100 governmental delegations during a Global Consultation in October 2015.

The PDD 2019 - 2023 Strategy and Workplan include a whole set of activities focusing on DRR and the reduction of displacement risks at the international and regional levels. Its Strategic Priorities are to (i) support integrated implementation of global policy frameworks on human mobility, climate change action and disaster risk reduction that are relevant for disaster displaced persons; (ii) promote policy and normative development to address gaps in the protection of persons at risk of displacement or displaced across borders; (iii) facilitate exchange of knowledge and strengthen capacity at the national and regional levels to implement effective practices and instruments that can prevent, reduce and address disaster displacement; (iv) strengthen evidence and data on disaster displacement and its impacts.

The PDD Steering Group is comprised of the following members: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Fiji, France, Germany, Kenya (Vice-Chair), Madagascar, the Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Senegal, Switzerland, and the European Union (Chair). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are standing invitees. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is a member ex officio, hosting the PDD Secretariat.

The PDD Advisory Committee gathers experts of international and regional organizations, research institutions, academia, private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders from the fields of humanitarian assistance and protection, human rights, migration management, refugee protection, disaster risk reduction, climate change action and development. Advisory Committee Members that have provided input to the policy brief constituting the basis for this submission include IOM, UNHCR, UNDRR, OHCHR as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and its Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam South Africa, American Red Cross, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA), the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), and a number of independent experts.