

ECO

THE WORLD REFUGEE DAY ISSUE

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Editorial: Andres Fuentes Production: Verity Martin

Will the Real Climate Leaders Please Stand Up?

ECO recognizes that Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are on the frontlines of climate change, already facing impacts which pose an existential threat to their communities. This is their message to you delegates:

The Pacific deserves more than just to survive - we deserve to thrive. We are looking to you, delegates, for solidarity and the courage to act.

You can help to preserve the incredible wealth of this region's languages which hold the stories and histories of thousands of islands, and millions of people whose culture, identity and traditional knowledge are a reflection of resilience, determination and courage in the face of the climate

crisis.

These histories and cultures and our very identities are rooted in our homes, our islands and our oceans. Now, we stand to lose them all because of the current climate crisis - a crisis which we can still avert. A crisis which is causing many to leave our ancestral homes. Displacement and migration must be our last resort, and efforts to mitigate and transition to renewable energy should continue in order to minimize future impacts. However, if we are forced to move or choose to do so because of climate change, we should be able to do so safely and with dignity.

Responding to these growing realities demands far stronger action

towards ending global carbon pollution, supporting resilient communities, protecting the rights for people on the move and developing long-term strategies to ensure that those who are forced to move now and in the future are able to relocate or migrate in a humane way. It is no doubt that the number of communities being displaced will increase as climate change impacts become more frequent and severe, including from flooding, coastal erosion, storms, and sea level rise.

We have the opportunity to ensure a future that is dignified, just and prosperous. A future not just for the Pacific, but for all our sons and daughters. The question is: will you act?

WIM Review: A Pillar of Salt or a Garden of Eden?

Sitting in a recent informal consultation, ECO had an unwelcome flashback to Bible classes. The old story of Lot's wife* looking back and being turned into a pillar of salt.

What inspired this unwelcome flashback? That would be the equally unwelcome assertion that the Review of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss & Damage (WIM) should be BACKWARD, not FORWARD looking, and should be constrained to just the work of the Executive Committee (ExCom).

What level of absurdness is that, you ask? Why review a body that has been in existence for six years, that was enshrined in the Paris Agreement (which, last time ECO checked, was a forward-looking agreement), without looking to the level of loss and damage that vulnerable countries will expect?

After six years in existence, it is time to assess whether the WIM is fit for purpose. Given the impacts the IPCC 1.5C

report tells us are now on the horizon, this is about more than just the ExCom. This is about the Mechanism as a whole, and whether it has and CAN deliver upon its original mandate, which includes the enhancement of action and support, such as finance.

A Review that simply looks at what has been done, in order to determine if something has been achieved, is virtually a box-ticking exercise. A Review that doesn't reflect on what's to come, misses the opportunity to reflect upon the needs of developing countries, and to thus prepare for what those needs are, including planning the types of support that are needed and putting this support in place.

The Review of the WIM must take a forward-looking approach as well, if it is to be of any use.

** Note: we're sure that Lot's wife had a name, but it turns out they were not so much into feminism around the time of writing the Bible.*

Climate-Induced Displacement: What to Learn From the IPCC Report on 1.5°C

ECO is still wondering about the real motives of those who would not want to give adequate attention to the 1.5°C Special Report of the IPCC. Pushing others to actively ignore the alarm bells for the planet and its people is what climate change denialists do. The suffering of men and women, boys and girls that we can hear about on World Refugee Day should be a stark reminder that we cannot ignore the potentially disastrous future billions of people and species on this planet will face. So don't let ignorance win over humanity's wisdom!

Climate change is directly driving displacement. Directly through extreme weather events that are destroying homes and flooding communities, as well as indirectly by exacerbating other drivers, such as increasing water stress or food insecurity that forces people to leave their homes to seek other livelihoods. But it is also true that "multiple drivers and embedded social processes influence the magnitude and pattern of livelihoods and poverty, and the changing structure of communities related to migration, displacement, and conflict", as the IPCC report states.

The IPCC special report did not produce figures in terms of the number of people affected by displacement, partially because no specific studies were identified which looked at the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C in terms of the expected number of climate migrants. Last year, a World Bank report concluded that, under a scenario of 3°C increase or more in global average temperature, the number of internally displaced people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America by 2050 could be up to 3 times the number (140 million people) compared to a 1.5°C compatible scenario.

In many regions which are already subject to extreme displacement, such as the Sahel and the Mediterranean, the climate crisis is already making things worse.

The report finds that the impacts of 1.5°C would "disproportionately affect disadvantaged and vulnerable populations through food insecurity, higher food prices, income losses, lost livelihood opportunities, adverse health impacts, and population displacements."

For example, at 2°C warming, there is a potential for significant population displacement concentrated in the tropics. Tropical populations may have to move at distances greater than 1000 km if global mean temperature rises by 2 °C from the period of 2011–2030 to the end of the century. A disproportionately rapid evacuation from the tropics could lead to concentration of population in tropical margins and the subtropics, where population densities could increase by 300% or more.

Sea-level rise is another concern. Countries with a population of at least 50 million people would be exposed to sea-level rise, at approximately 1.5°C temperature rise above today's level, include China, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, United States and Vietnam.

ECO knows there are many smart people in these venues which have read the 1.5°C report in more detail and have also understood that massively scaled-up **action** is needed on mitigation, adaptation, and addressing loss and damage. So, negotiators, be "climate-smart" and focus on action and support. Millions of people who would otherwise have to leave their homes will thank you.

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Climate Migrants in the Middle East: a Matter to Tackle Now

For the Middle East, the climate crisis is already a harsh reality. From the floods of Jeddah to the droughts and sea level rise in many Mediterranean cities. The region will face more droughts, sea level rise, heat waves, and more hot days, which will make especially children and women more vulnerable. These effects will lead to crop failure in the areas with poor natural resource management. The conflict over scarce resources will increase and lead to demographic pressures in the places people flee to. This will mean having internally displaced persons; others might seek asylum. They might be portrayed as economic migrants, but in 10 years they will be clearly classified as climate migrants. One of the biggest challenges in developing new policies will be to define such climate migrants.

The Nile delta, in Egypt, for example, which is highly vulnerable to sea level rise, is densely populated. With a 1m rise in sea level, an estimated

4,500 km² of farmland could be flooded, displacing 6 million people.

Internal migration has already started in the Middle East. If the climate crisis intensifies, we risk a political and armed conflict taking hold throughout the Fertile Crescent, which will probably be a lot less fertile because of climate change. Part of the region is already experiencing a "climate-war" in Syria which has been linked to the 2006-2010 drought that led to significant migration of former farmers and unemployed youth to move towards the countries' urban areas. The region is already water-stressed. This scarcity in combination with other social and institutional factors could continue to fuel tensions in the region or trigger other abrupt, violent conflicts as we have seen in Syria.

Having said this, and in order not to have massive, destabilizing levels of climate migration, the world should

not exceed the 1.5°C increase, as well as creating clear mechanisms on how to deal with this pressing issue. The mechanisms should take into consideration needed funding and strong international laws for protecting migrants.

Global warming will do the Middle East no favours. The region will be hit hard by the effects of climate change. Morocco is already serving as a transit route between West Africa and Europe, which is creating pressure on its coastal areas that are already facing climate change effects. The number of warm days in the region is expected to increase at a rate twice the global average. Climate migrants will be the new internal and regional security issue. These people will face health and psychological problems as well. Concrete measures to shield these new migrants are needed since, otherwise, the area will be facing more resource conflicts which will weaken the States in the region.

Climate Induced Displacement Worsens Alongside Refugee Crisis

Over 70 million people in the world now live as refugees who fled war, persecution and conflict - the highest level that the UNHCR has seen in its almost 70 years, according to their Global Trends report. It is the world's developing regions who are hosting 84% of all refugees.

While they grapple with the refugee crisis, the unfolding climate emergency is making it worse for them as well as for the entire global community. In 2017 alone, there were over 18 million new displacements associated with disasters (such as floods and storms accounting for more than 80% of the incidents) across 135 countries and territories, according to Geneva based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

The deadly drought in Afghanistan that affected 2.2 million people, displaced more people human beings in 2018 than the war between the country's government and the Taliban. In the last few weeks, India has faced extremely high temperatures wherein the capital city

of Delhi had its highest ever June temperature of 48°C, while the city of Churu in Rajasthan state experienced 50.8°C. More than 70% of districts in the Indian states of Maharashtra and Karnataka are hit by drought and crop failure, forcing thousands of people out of their homes and making it hard for about 8 million farmers to survive.

While the issue of climate induced displacement has made significant progress at UNFCCC, the actions unfortunately do not match the emergency that the world faces. The wide-ranging recommendations by the Task Force for Displacement were approved at COP24 and also extended its mandate. However, without sufficient financial resources to back the recommendations up, the actions may simply remain a wish list. We must remember that the most vulnerable communities who did not even contribute towards the current climate crisis are suffering the most. Developing countries need support both in terms of capacity-building as well as sufficient financial resources. Support must be provided now!

Secondary Periodic Review: Wading On Thin Ice

A serious discussion suddenly broke out yesterday in room Addis Abeba on how to meet the ultimate objective of the Convention and prevent dangerous climate change. This under the item of the Second Periodic Review (SPR) of the long-term global goal under the Convention, where Parties started sharing concrete ideas and proposals for how to move forward with Theme 1 of the item – reviewing the adequacy of the global goal. (Theme 2 is a review of progress in getting there)

Some might say that we are hopelessly off course from a pathway anywhere near 2 degrees Celsius that it doesn't matter much whether we aim for 1.5°C or well below 2°C or somewhere in between. But there is a lot of truth in the old adage that if you don't know where you are going, you are unlikely to get there.

And in fact, the global goal agreed in 2015 under the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC is ambiguous. For ECO it is clear, limiting warming to 1.5°C is the only reasonable option. What is most important – Limiting warming to 1.5°C, or well below 2°C. What about overshoot and return? How much effort should be made to limit warming to 1.5°C. Should “well below 2°C be treated as the “real” objective, or a backstop that we should never risk approaching.

The more we have learned before and especially since Paris from the science and impacts, the more cause for alarm about the



Source: <https://www.welt.de/wissenschaft/article195457409/Eisschmelze-in-Groenland-Hier-laufen-Schlittenhunde-uebers-Wasser.html>

consequences of exceeding 1.5°C.

Over the past year, a combination of the heat waves, arctic melting, flooding and other extreme weather driven events, and a growing awareness of the much more dramatic impacts that will result from exceeding 1.5°C of warming, has driven an unprecedented wave of concern and activism in many countries. 1.5°C will already mean devastating loss and damage for countless people, but two degrees is far worse. And governments are

responding with announcements of NDC revision processes and net zero targets within a generation, not just in the far off second half of the century.

The SPR is the only process we have to take a sober second look at the adequacy of the global goal, and get clarity on a scientifically informed long-term temperature goal. Of course this will be based on the evidence and discussions during the SPR - highly likely to be centered on 1.5°C.