

KNOMAD Workshop

***Planned Relocation in the Context of Climate Change –
Practical Tools***

April 11 - 12, 2017

MC C2 -131, World Bank, Washington, DC

CONCEPT NOTE

Objectives

The KNOMAD Working Group on Environmental Change and Migration will convene a workshop in Washington, DC on 11-12 April, 2017 with the specific objectives of:

1. Enhancing understanding of the conditions under which planned relocations may be undertaken to respond to the effects of climate change and situating this specific type of movement within the broader context of mobility induced by environmental change;
2. Learning from insights from different geographical and contextual experiences on how planned relocations have been carried out in the past and can be carried out in the future;
3. Providing input into the development of practical tools on planned relocations.

This workshop will build on prior meetings organized by the Working Group, including an [October 2016 workshop on planned relocations](#) for World Bank staff as well as previously-convened [meetings by other partners](#). It is intended to feed into a May 2017 consultation with States to review the draft toolbox.

Background

It has long been recognized that the interplay of a range of drivers with increasing environmental change, including climate change, will lead people to leave their communities. Some will leave because of the effects of sudden-onset weather-related disasters, others because the long-term effects of environmental change have destroyed their livelihoods. The timing of such mobility is likely to vary – some will move in anticipation of the effects of environmental change while others will move only when they can no longer survive where they are. Some will have the resources to move on their own and will likely follow existing migration routes. In some cases, governments will move to relocate at-risk populations in order to protect them from the effects of climate change. These planned relocations can occur *reactively* after a major sudden-onset disaster – when it is determined that people simply cannot return to their communities because the physical habitat is unsafe. In other cases, relocation will be planned as an *anticipatory* measure where hazards have increased the risk of continued habitation to unacceptable levels. Indeed, this type of intervention may be an effective measure to reduce disaster risk, as affirmed by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Finally, planned



relocation can occur as a consequence of measures related to climate change adaptation or disaster risk reduction measures.

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change, meeting in Cancún in 2010, encouraged enhanced action and international cooperation on planned relocation as one of three types of human mobility that should be considered within climate change adaptation measures. COP 21, which took place in Paris in 2015, requested the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism to establish a task force to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change. Planned relocation is one such approach.

The Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Institute for the Environment and Human Security of UN University have been working to develop guidance for States and other stakeholders on planned relocation in the context of natural disasters and the slow onset effects of climate change. Planned relocation has been defined for this purpose as: *“a planned process in which persons or groups of persons move or are assisted to move away from their homes or places of temporary residence, are settled in a new location, and provided with the conditions for rebuilding their lives. Planned Relocation is carried out under the authority of the State, takes place within national borders, and is undertaken to protect people from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change, including the effects of climate change. Such Planned Relocation may be carried out at the individual, household, and/or community levels.”*

Experience in relocating people demonstrates the complexity of the endeavor and the strong potential to violate basic rights and leave people much worse off. States faced with situations where planned relocation may be needed lack guidance on the basic principles and rights that apply to this powerful and challenging option. The [Guidance on Planned Relocations](#) therefore sets out general principles to assist States and other actors faced with the need to assess whether and how to undertake these programs. The aspiration is that these general principles will be helpful to States and supporting actors in formulating Planned Relocation laws, policies, plans, and programs. The Guidance was developed in consultation with representatives of States, international organizations, and experts from a wide range of disciplines and experiences, including disaster risk reduction, development, humanitarian response, human rights, climate change, migration, environmental studies, and law.

The next step in the process is the development of practical tools, including specific measures and examples of good practices to assist States and other interested actors in translating these general principles into concrete laws, policies, plans, and programs. This April 2017 KNOMAD workshop offers the opportunity to bring expertise from the working group to bear on the development of these practical tools. The April workshop will bring together a broader group of experts who will consider draft language around practical tools for actually planning relocations. The product of the April meeting will then be discussed in event in May 2017 in Geneva with representatives of governments who are considering, planning or implementing relocations to protect people from the effects of environmental change, including climate change.