

Briefing Paper

Committee: UNHCR

Topic: The Question of Developing a Legal Definition of Climate Refugees

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Summary

Since the onset of the First Industrial Revolution in 1760, human activity has accelerated the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. This rapid increase in emissions has intensified the greenhouse effect, resulting in global temperature rise, disrupted climate systems, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events including droughts, floods, cyclones, wildfires, and sea-level rise. These environmental changes have had profound social, economic, and political consequences, particularly for communities that rely heavily on natural resources or live in vulnerable geographic regions.

As a result, millions of people have been forced to migrate - either within their own countries or across borders - in search of safety, stability, and basic resources. These individuals are often referred to as *climate refugees*, though this term has no legal recognition under current international law. The absence of a formally agreed definition means that people displaced by environmental factors cannot claim protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, which only covers those fleeing persecution based on specific criteria such as race, religion, nationality, or political opinion.

This legal gap leaves climate-displaced people at heightened risk, as many states - especially those with strict immigration policies - do not recognise them as refugees and may deny entry or assistance. Consequently, many attempt unsafe migration routes, where they can face exploitation, trafficking, and human rights abuses. Establishing a clear international definition and framework for climate refugees could provide vital protections, prevent humanitarian crises, and promote global responsibility-sharing.

Definition of Key Terms

Climate – the weather conditions prevailing in an area in general or over a long period of time.

Weather – the state of the atmosphere at a particular place and time as regards heat, cloudiness, dryness, sunshine, wind, rain, etc.

Immigrant – a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.

Displace – force (someone) to leave their home.

Natural Disaster – a catastrophic event caused by natural processes of the Earth, resulting in significant loss of life, property damage, and environmental destruction.

UNFCCC – United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change

Climate Change – a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

Greenhouse Gases – the gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation.

Emissions – the release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.

Net Zero – a target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Adverse Effects of Climate Change – means changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare.

Asylum Seeker – someone who is seeking international protection.

Refugee (1951 Refugee Convention) – those fleeing war and conflict who face persecution along grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

Refugee Status – a legal recognition, under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, that a person cannot return to their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons like race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, granting them protection and specific rights in the country where they seek asylum.

Mitigation – Efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases, including switching to renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and preserving carbon sinks such as forests.

Adaptation – Actions taken to adjust systems, societies, and economies to the effects of climate change, reducing harm and enhancing resilience to impacts such as flooding, drought, and temperature increases.

Loss and Damage – The negative impacts of climate change that occur when adaptation is no longer possible or sufficient, including permanent loss (e.g., land lost to sea-level rise) and temporary damage (e.g., infrastructure destroyed by storms).

Internally Displaced Person (IDP) – Someone forced to flee their home for reasons such as conflict, disaster, or environmental degradation, but who remains within their own country's borders. IDPs do not have the same legal protections as refugees under international law.

Human Mobility (Climate Context) – An umbrella term used by UN agencies referring to all forms of movement influenced by climate change, including displacement, migration, and planned relocation.

Displacement (Climate Context) – A form of forced movement where individuals or communities must leave their homes due to sudden or slow-onset climate impacts, such as storms, droughts, or sea-level rise.

Planned Relocation – A strategy where communities are moved by governments or authorities from high-risk areas to safer locations, usually when environmental threats make continued habitation unsafe.

Migration (Climate Context) – Movement of people influenced by environmental factors, which may be voluntary, involuntary, temporary, or permanent. Unlike displacement, climate-linked migration may involve some level of choice.

Vulnerability (Climate Context) – The degree to which a population, ecosystem, or system is susceptible to climate-related harm. This depends on exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity.

Adaptive Capacity – The ability of a system, community, or country to adjust to climate impacts, reduce potential damage, and recover from climate-related events.

Resilience – The capacity of communities or systems to withstand, absorb, recover from, and adapt to climate-related shocks and stressors.

Environmental Degradation – The deterioration of the natural environment due to factors such as deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, and resource depletion, often intensified by climate change.

Sea-Level Rise – The increase in global sea levels caused by melting ice sheets and thermal expansion of seawater as the climate warms, threatening coastal populations and ecosystems.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) – Strategies and practices aimed at minimizing vulnerabilities and risks to disasters, including early warning systems, infrastructure planning, and emergency preparedness.

Background Information

Human-driven climate change began intensifying during the First Industrial Revolution, when industrial processes and fossil fuel combustion became widespread. Since then, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have continued to rise, contributing to long-term climatic shifts, ecosystem degradation, and more frequent and severe natural disasters. These impacts have

disproportionately affected developing nations and low-lying coastal regions, where populations are more vulnerable to environmental shocks and have fewer resources to adapt.

Despite the clear link between climate change and displacement, the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol do not recognise environmental deterioration or natural disasters as grounds for refugee status. This gap in protection has become increasingly problematic as the number of people affected by climate-related displacement grows each year. According to UN estimates, tens of millions may be displaced by climate events annually in the coming decades, many of whom will cross borders in search of safety.

Several organisations, such as Climate Refugees and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), advocate expanding or modernising legal frameworks to provide protection for those displaced by climate change. Within the UN system, both the UNHCR and UNFCCC have acknowledged the growing problem. A major milestone occurred in 2013, when the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) was created at COP19. The mechanism aims to address climate impacts that cannot be avoided through mitigation or adaptation, and it explicitly identifies climate-related displacement, migration, and planned relocation as areas requiring international cooperation.

Despite these developments, many member states argue that a legal definition of “climate refugee” is unnecessary or politically difficult. Concerns include financial responsibilities, migration pressures, and the potential need to modify existing international treaties. Nevertheless, the number of people displaced by climate impacts continues to rise, making the issue increasingly urgent.

Part of the hesitation stems from concerns about the political, economic, and legal implications of expanding the refugee definition. Some states fear increased responsibilities; others argue that existing human rights frameworks are sufficient. Yet as climate change accelerates, these positions are becoming harder to maintain, driving renewed discussions about the need for international standards.

The UN continues to affirm universal human rights principles—such as those in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—which apply to all people regardless of status. However, without specific legal protections for climate-displaced persons, the international community faces mounting pressure to address one of the most significant humanitarian challenges of the 21st century.

70 YEARS
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS
#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.



ARTICLE 1
When children are born, they are free and each should be treated in the same way. They have reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a friendly manner.



ARTICLE 2
Everyone can claim the following rights, despite - a different sex - a different skin colour - speaking a different language - thinking different things - believing in another religion - owning more or less - being born in another social group - coming from another country. It also makes no difference whether the country you live in is independent or not.



ARTICLE 3
You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.



ARTICLE 4
Nobody has the right to treat you as his or her slave and you should not make anyone your slave.



ARTICLE 5
Nobody has the right to torture you.



ARTICLE 6
You should be legally protected in the same way everywhere, and like everyone else.



ARTICLE 7
The law is the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all.



ARTICLE 8
You should be able to ask for legal help when the rights your country grants you are not respected.



ARTICLE 9
Nobody has the right to put you in prison, to keep you there, or to send you away from your country unjustly, or without a good reason.



ARTICLE 10
If you must go on trial this should be done in public. The people who try you should not let themselves be influenced by others.



ARTICLE 11
You should be considered innocent until it can be proved that you are guilty. If you are accused of a crime, you should always have the right to defend yourself. Nobody has the right to condemn you and punish you for something you have not done.



ARTICLE 12
You have the right to ask to be protected if someone tries to harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.



ARTICLE 13
You have the right to come and go as you wish within your country. You have the right to leave your country to go to another one; and you should be able to return to your country if you want.



ARTICLE 14
If someone hurts you, you have the right to go to another country and ask it to protect you. You lose this right if you have killed someone and if you yourself do not respect what is written here.



ARTICLE 15
You have the right to belong to a country and nobody can prevent you, without a good reason, from belonging to another country if you wish.



ARTICLE 16
As soon as a person is legally entitled, he or she has the right to marry and have a family. Neither the colour of your skin, nor the country you come from nor your religion should be impediments to doing this. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and also when they are separated. Nobody should force a person to marry. The Government of your country should protect your family and its members.



ARTICLE 17
You have the right to own things and nobody has the right to take these from you without a good reason.



ARTICLE 18
You have the right to profess your religion freely to change it, and to practise it either on your own or with other people.



ARTICLE 19
You have the right to think what you want, and to say what you like, and nobody should forbid you from doing so. You should be able to share your ideas - also with people from any other country.



ARTICLE 20
You have the right to organize peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings in a peaceful way. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.



ARTICLE 21
You have the right to take part in your country's political affairs either by belonging to the Government yourself or by choosing politicians who have the same ideas as you. Governments should be voted for regularly and voting should be secret. You should get a vote and all votes should be equal. You also have the same right to join the public service as anyone else.



ARTICLE 22
The society in which you live should help you to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) that are offered to you and to all the men and women in your country.



ARTICLE 23
You have the right to work, to be free to choose your work, and to get a salary that allows you to live and support your family. If a man and a woman do the same work, they should get the same pay. All people who work have the right to join together to defend their interests.



ARTICLE 24
Each work day should not be too long, since everyone has the right to rest, and should be able to take regular paid holidays.



ARTICLE 25
You have the right to have whatever you need so that you and your family do not fall ill; do not go hungry; have clothes and a house; and are helped if you are out of work. If you are ill, if you are old, if your wife or husband is dead, or if you do not earn a living for any other reason you cannot help. Both a mother who is going to have a baby and her baby should get special help. All children have the same rights, whether or not the mother is married.



ARTICLE 26
You have the right to go to school and everyone should go to school. Primary schooling should be free. You should be able to learn a profession or continue your studies as far as you wish. At school, you should be able to develop all your talents and you should be taught to get on with others, whatever their race, their religion or the country they come from. Your parents have the right to choose how and what you will be taught at school.



ARTICLE 27
You have the right to share in your country's arts and sciences, and in any good they do. Your works as an artist, a writer or a scientist should be protected, and you should be able to benefit from them.



ARTICLE 28
To make sure that your rights will be respected, there must be an "order" that can protect them. This "order" should be local and worldwide.



ARTICLE 29
You have duties towards the community within which your personality can fully develop. The law should guarantee human rights. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.



ARTICLE 30
No society and no human being in any part of the world should act in such a way as to destroy the rights that you have just been reading about.



Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Sudan – Sudan has one of the world’s largest populations of forcibly displaced people exposed to climate hazards. The country faces severe desertification, recurring droughts, and increasingly unpredictable rainfall patterns, all of which undermine agriculture — the main source of livelihood for much of the populace. Climate-driven resource scarcity has also contributed to internal conflict and displacement. Sudan is therefore heavily invested in international frameworks that support adaptation, humanitarian assistance, and eventual return or resettlement of displaced populations. It generally advocates for stronger global action on climate finance and protection for climate-vulnerable communities.

Somalia – Somalia is among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally, frequently experiencing flooding, drought, and extreme weather linked to climate change. These recurring shocks regularly displace communities, both internally and across borders, while simultaneously fuelling food insecurity and weakening state capacity. Given this reality, Somalia supports international efforts that recognise climate-related displacement and enhance humanitarian support. The government seeks frameworks that enable both protection abroad and support for people returning home once conditions improve.

China – China is the world’s largest current emitter of greenhouse gases, responsible for approximately 29% of global emissions in 2024. As a major industrial power undergoing rapid economic development, it faces international pressure to reduce emissions and increase transparency in climate action. However, China is also highly vulnerable to climate impacts, including coastal flooding, severe storms, and water scarcity in key river basins. The government tends to resist new legally binding obligations regarding climate-driven migration but supports global climate finance efforts and emphasises the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, arguing that historical emitters should bear greater responsibility.

United States of America – The United States contributes roughly 15% of global greenhouse-gas emissions and experiences significant climate-related impacts of its own, such as drought affecting nearly a third of the contiguous states in 2025. As both a major emitter and a country vulnerable to hurricanes and wildfires, the U.S. plays a central role in global climate policy.

Historically, its position on climate-related migration has varied between administrations. While supportive of humanitarian assistance, the U.S. has not recognised “climate refugees” as a legal category under domestic or international law. It tends to promote resilience programs, disaster response mechanisms, and voluntary migration pathways rather than new binding refugee definitions.

UNFCCC – The UNFCCC is the primary UN body responsible for coordinating global action on climate change. It oversees international agreements including the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. The UNFCCC also established mechanisms such as the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, which directly addresses climate-related displacement,

migration, and relocation. Though the UNFCCC does not define “climate refugees,” it plays a critical role in assessing climate impacts and supporting vulnerable countries.

UNHCR – UNHCR is responsible for protecting refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons. While it operates within the legal limitations of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the UNHCR acknowledges that climate change is an increasingly important driver of displacement.

Although it cannot unilaterally change the refugee definition, UNHCR works to protect displaced people through humanitarian assistance, temporary protection measures, and advocacy on climate-related risks.

UNHRC – United Nations Human Rights Council: The UNHRC focuses on protecting and promoting human rights globally. It has repeatedly emphasised that climate change threatens fundamental rights, including the rights to life, water, food, and housing. While not responsible for defining refugees, the UNHRC supports the integration of human rights considerations into climate policy and highlights the need to protect vulnerable populations displaced by environmental degradation.

IOM – International Organization for Migration: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading global agency on migration governance and plays a central role in addressing climate-related human mobility. Unlike the UNHCR, which focuses on refugees under existing legal categories, the IOM works across all forms of migration, including voluntary, forced, internal, and cross-border mobility. IOM conducts research, develops policies, and implements field programmes in climate-vulnerable regions to help governments prepare for and respond to environmental displacement. Its work includes:

1. Early warning systems and disaster preparedness
2. Planned relocation projects in areas threatened by sea-level rise or extreme weather
3. Community resilience initiatives to reduce forced migration
4. Data collection and risk assessments through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

IOM has been one of the strongest advocates for recognising climate change as a major driver of displacement. While it does not define “climate refugees,” the organisation actively promotes rights-based support for people affected by climate impacts and collaborates closely with UNHCR, UNFCCC, and regional bodies.

IDMC – Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established in 1998, is the world’s leading source of data and analysis on internal displacement. It tracks and reports on displacement caused by conflict, violence, disasters, and increasingly, climate-related environmental change. IDMC produces the annual Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), which has consistently shown that weather-related disasters - such as storms, floods, and droughts - displace more people each year than conflict. In many countries, the majority of climate-related mobility happens internally, making IDMC’s data crucial

for understanding the true scale of the issue. The IDMC works with governments, NGOs, and UN agencies to:

1. Monitor and quantify climate-related displacement
2. Assess risk and vulnerability to future climate impacts
3. Support the creation of national policies that address internal displacement
4. Highlight data gaps that prevent effective protection measures

Although IDMC is not a policymaking body, its evidence-based research is widely used by states and UN organisations when shaping policies on climate change, migration, and humanitarian response.

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the world’s leading scientific body for assessing climate change. Established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the IPCC provides governments with comprehensive scientific assessments on climate trends, impacts, risks, and potential response strategies. Although it does not create policy, its reports form the scientific foundation for international climate negotiations under the UNFCCC. The IPCC is particularly significant in the context of climate-related displacement because its assessments highlight the direct link between human-induced climate change and population movements. Across multiple assessment reports, the IPCC has documented:

1. Rising sea levels that threaten the habitability of low-lying islands and coastal regions
2. Increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as cyclones, droughts, and floods
3. Long-term environmental degradation, including desertification and ecosystem collapse, which undermine livelihoods and force migration
4. Projected increases in climate-induced displacement throughout the 21st century, especially in regions with limited adaptive capacity

The IPCC’s findings strongly influence global policy debates, including discussions on the recognition and protection of people displaced by climate impacts. Its scientific authority provides evidence used by UNFCCC bodies, governments, humanitarian organisations, and civil-society groups advocating for stronger protections for climate-affected populations.

Timeline of Events (Relevant UN Treaties)

1945 – Establishment of the United Nations: Created to maintain peace, security, and international cooperation, laying the foundation for later human rights and climate frameworks.

1948 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Affirms universal rights for all humans, including the right to life, security, and adequate living standards - principles important for climate-displaced persons.

1951 – Refugee Convention: Defines a refugee and establishes legal protections; environmental displacement is not included.

1967 – Refugee Protocol: Removes geographical and temporal restrictions from the 1951 Convention but still does not address climate-driven displacement.

1972 – Stockholm Declaration (UN Conference on the Human Environment): First international acknowledgement that environmental degradation can affect human wellbeing.

1988 – Establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): Provides scientific analysis on climate change and its impacts, including displacement risk.

1992 – UNFCCC established: First international treaty specifically addressing climate change, recognising that it may have severe socio-economic consequences.

1992 – First Conference of the Parties (COP1): Launches regular meetings to advance climate policy.

1995 – IPCC Second Assessment Report: Highlights the link between climate change and population displacement, placing the issue on the global agenda.

2005 – Kyoto Protocol enters into force: First legally binding emissions-reduction commitments for developed countries.

2010 – Cancun Adaptation Framework (COP16): Officially acknowledges climate-related displacement, migration, and planned relocation as areas requiring action.

2013 – Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (COP19): Addresses climate-related damage, including forced displacement; first structured UN discussion of “climate mobility.”

2015 – Paris Agreement: Commits countries to limit global temperature rise. Article 8 recognises loss and damage, including displacement, as a critical consequence of climate change.

2016 – New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants: UN Members commit to protecting all displaced persons but still do not define climate refugees.

2018 – Global Compact for Migration (GCM): First major UN document acknowledging climate change as a driver of cross-border migration and recommending protections — though still non-binding.

2021 – Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26): Reinforces commitments to limit Global Warming and recognises increased climate risks, including displacement.

2023 – UNHCR warns that climate impacts are now a leading driver of displacement globally - Though not a treaty, this marks a major shift in international awareness

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The international community has made several indirect attempts to address climate-related displacement, though none have resulted in a legally recognised definition of “climate refugee.” Most actions to date fall under broader climate or humanitarian frameworks rather than targeted legal protection.

1. The Paris Agreement (2015)

While the Paris Agreement does not define climate refugees, it does acknowledge the link between climate change and displacement. Under Article 8 on Loss and Damage, the Agreement recognises the need to address climate-induced human mobility, including displacement, migration, and planned relocation. This led to the creation of the Task Force on Displacement, which advises governments on ways to manage climate-related mobility. However, these recommendations are non-binding, and no legal protections for displaced persons were established.

2. UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response

UNHCR has developed guidelines to support people affected by sudden onset disasters such as floods, storms, and droughts. These measures include emergency shelter, legal support, and humanitarian assistance. However, because UNHCR operates within the constraints of the 1951 Refugee Convention, it cannot grant refugee status to climate-displaced individuals unless they also face persecution under the Convention’s criteria.

3. Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (2013)

Established under the UNFCCC at COP19, this framework formally recognised climate-related displacement as an issue requiring coordinated action. The mechanism focuses on supporting vulnerable countries, gathering data, and facilitating cooperation. However, the WIM does not provide legal protection or resettlement pathways, and funding remains limited.

4. Global Compact for Migration (2018)

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was the first international agreement to explicitly recognise climate change as a driver of migration. It encourages states to plan for slow-onset climate impacts, strengthen early warning systems, and consider humanitarian visas or temporary protection schemes. Despite its significance, the GCM is non-binding, and many states have not implemented its recommendations.

5. Regional and National Initiatives

Some countries and regions have taken steps independently. Examples include:

1. New Zealand’s humanitarian visa pathways for Pacific Islanders affected by climate change (pilot programmes only, not a legal right).

2. The African Union's Kampala Convention, which recognises disaster-induced displacement internally.
3. Small island nations advocating strongly at COP meetings for recognition of climate-driven loss of land and livelihoods.

However, these efforts are uneven, limited in scope, and not applicable globally.

Why this is insufficient

Despite growing awareness, no international treaty creates a legal status for climate refugees, leaving millions unprotected. Existing initiatives address the symptoms of climate displacement but not the legal gap at its core.

Possible Solutions

Addressing climate-induced displacement requires a combination of legal, political, financial, and humanitarian strategies. The following solutions could form the basis of formal resolutions within the UN system:

1. Establish a Clear International Definition of "Climate Refugee"

A new legal category could be created, either by:

- a. Amending the 1951 Refugee Convention, or
- b. Creating a new, separate treaty under the UN specifically for people displaced by climate change.

This definition could cover individuals displaced by:

- a. Sea-level rise
- b. Desertification
- c. Extreme weather events
- d. Loss of habitability due to long-term environmental degradation

Recognising climate refugees formally would grant them legal rights, protection, and pathways to asylum.

2. Develop a UN-led Framework for Identifying and Protecting Climate-Displaced Persons

A new global document could set out:

- a. Criteria for determining climate-related displacement
- b. Minimum protection standards
- c. Responsibilities of states for accepting and assisting displaced individuals
- d. Mechanisms for emergency relocation

This framework could function similarly to existing refugee protocols but tailored to environmental displacement.

3. Strengthen Climate Adaptation and Resilience in Vulnerable Regions

Preventing displacement is often more sustainable than managing it. Solutions include:

- a. Investing in infrastructure (e.g., flood defences, drought-resistant agriculture)
- b. Funding early-warning systems
- c. Supporting community-based adaptation projects
- d. Ensuring equitable access to climate finance

These measures reduce the need for forced migration and help communities withstand climate shocks.

4. Create Safe, Legal Migration Pathways for Climate-Affected Populations

New international or regional agreements could establish:

- a. Humanitarian visas for climate-displaced persons
- b. Temporary protection schemes
- c. Planned relocation programmes
- d. Regional free-movement frameworks in climate hotspots (e.g., Pacific Islands, East Africa)

This would prevent dangerous irregular migration and reduce vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation.

5. Mobilise and Expand Global Climate Finance

A significant challenge for many countries is funding. Solutions include:

- a. Strengthening the Loss and Damage Fund (established under the UNFCCC)
- b. Ensuring dedicated financial support for displacement and relocation
- c. Encouraging contributions from major emitters and private-sector actors

Countries most responsible for historical emissions could accept greater financial obligations.

6. Enhance Data Collection and Monitoring

UN bodies like the IPCC, IOM, and IDMC could be given expanded roles in:

- a. Tracking climate displacement trends
- b. Creating risk assessments for vulnerable regions
- c. Supporting states in planning relocation strategies

Better data leads to better policy decisions and more effective mitigation.

7. Promote International Burden-Sharing

Just as the Refugee Convention is built on shared responsibility, climate migration solutions should involve:

- a. Coordinated resettlement programmes

- b. Regional humanitarian coalitions
- c. Support for small island states facing existential threats

This prevents disproportionate pressure on neighbouring countries.

Useful Links

1. [A legal status for "climate refugees" | United Nations Network on Migration](#)
2. [conveng.pdf](#)
3. [Climate Refugees](#)
4. [UNFCCC](#)
5. [About UNHCR | UNHCR](#)
6. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | OHCHR](#)
7. [Asylum-seekers | UNHCR](#)
8. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations](#)

Bibliography

1. [How the climate crisis is driving forced displacement in these five countries](#)
2. [United Nations | Peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet](#)
3. [International Organization for Migration | IOM, UN Migration](#)
4. [Home | IDMC - Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#)
5. [IPCC — Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)