

BRIEFING PAPER

POSITIONED FOR ACTION

Displacement in the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction

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This briefing paper provides policy-makers, agencies, civil society and other stakeholders with a summary of how displacement is positioned in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR) as a critical issue for reducing disaster risk. It provides analysis of the global indicator framework and updated DRR terminology endorsed by the General Assembly as key tools for measuring global progress. It also aims to clarify the terms “displaced”, “evacuated” and “relocated” in relation to the SFDRR’s priorities for action, targets and indicators, as governments have signaled is needed.¹ Finally, it looks forward to the Global Platform as a first opportunity for the international community to review progress since the SFDRR’s adoption.

KEY MESSAGES

- The SFDRR provides multiple hooks for policy and action to address displacement as a major human consequence and driver of disaster risk
- Integrating displacement in DRR policy and measures will promote policy coherence across multiple ministry or agency mandates and other global agendas where disaster-related displacement is also recognized as a key challenge, including the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Agenda for Humanity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Disaster displacement is a reality for most of the governments who have adopted the SFDRR; systematic collection, management and access to good quality displacement data is needed to translate commitments into action
- The inclusion of displacement in national DRR indicators and disaster loss databases is needed for evidence-based policy that gives priority to reaching people who are vulnerable and at risk of being left behind

Introduction

Displacement is one of the most prevalent human impacts of disaster. It means, at minimum, the disruption of family and community life and heightened protection risks, particularly for people with specific needs such as women, children, older people and people with disabilities. The most profound impacts of displacement are often difficult to quantify, such as the debilitating effects of cultural and community dislocation and psychosocial impacts on mental health and social well-being.² Large-scale displacements may have destabilising effects on both disaster-affected and receiving areas. Its dynamic and complex nature adds greatly to the challenges for civil protection authorities and disaster risk managers.

Where disaster risk is not reduced, displacement may become chronic or protracted. This in turn may act as a driver of disaster risk as vulnerabilities are exacerbated and resilience against further shocks and stresses is undermined. Data on people caught in such patterns of displacement signal that people are effectively sidelined from recovery and development – the “build back better” principle is not being implemented.³

Where disaster risk is not reduced, displacement may become chronic or protracted. This in turn may act as a driver of disaster risk

The first major international agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR), was adopted by 187 country delegations to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Sendai, Japan on 18 March 2015, and endorsed by the UN General Assembly. Work to translate the targets and priorities of the SFDRR into action at global to national

levels is well underway, including development of the policy architecture to support implementation. A global indicator framework, common DRR terminology and reporting mechanisms are in place, action plans have been developed or updated by regional level DRR platforms and preparations are underway for the biennial Global Platform on disaster risk reduction to convene in Cancun, Mexico (22-26 May 2017).

The UN Secretary General’s report to the General Assembly in August 2016 highlighted the “historic opportunity” provided by the Sendai Framework, along with the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2016 summits on humanitarian action and on refugees and migrants, “for committed collective action to strengthen preparedness and response capacity in order to protect and assist more effectively people at risk of displacement by disasters and climate change”.⁴

Locating displacement in the Sendai Framework

The SFDRR is a voluntary, non-binding agreement that aims to substantially “[reduce] disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.” In doing so, it not only aims to reduce existing risks, but also to prevent new risks and strengthen resilience. Achieving this goal is the primary responsibility of governments but is also shared with other stakeholders including local authorities, the private sector and civil society. It has a broad application, including “the risk of small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters caused by natural or man-made hazards, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks” (SFDRR paragraph 15).

The need to incorporate “key markers of socio-economic



Settlement for people displaced by the drought in Asabuli village in Sitti Zone, north-eastern Ethiopia. Photo: NRC, 2015

vulnerability” in DRR knowledge and standards, which would include displacement,⁵ was noted at the Science and Technology Conference organised by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in January 2016. As both a major human consequence and a driver of disaster risk, displacement is a relevant issue across the Sendai Framework’s provisions, as further discussed below.

Displacement has gained increasing visibility as an issue on the DRR agenda. As a report from the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly in August observes, “[t]he needs of displaced persons and the reduction of disaster-related displacement risks are prominently addressed in the Sendai Framework”.⁶ This is illustrated by the frequency displacement and related terms are used in the SFDRR text compared to its predecessor framework, the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015).

The Hyogo Framework makes just one reference to displacement in relation to programmes to support displaced people that may increase exposure and vulnerability to disaster (paragraph 19.i). Evacuation is also mentioned only once.⁷ In contrast, the Sendai Framework addresses a range of displacement-related issues, using the term “displaced” or “displacement” four times, the related terms “evacuation” or “evacuated” twice, and the term “relocation” once. The term “human mobility” is also used once to encompass different forms of population movement across a spectrum including (predominantly forced) displacement and (predominantly voluntary) migration. This is particularly useful in the context of slow-onset disasters and gradual environmental degradation where the distinction between displacement and migration is often blurred.⁸

These terms are used in the Preamble as well as in the main body of the text, which is organised in relation to four policy-oriented priorities for action (box 1). Their location and usage provides insights into understanding of the terms “displaced”, “evacuated” and “relocated” in the DRR context, which is complemented by standard or expert definitions from other domains. The SFDRR also identifies a variety of key activities for states, regional and international organisations and other relevant stakeholders to address displacement risk and minimise its negative consequences, including by facilitating human mobility as a voluntary or protective measure that may strengthen resilience.

Progress on each of [the SFDRR] targets will play a part in preventing, minimizing and addressing displacement and its impacts

Displacement is a politically sensitive issue for some countries, particularly due to its association with conflict. This was seen in the negotiations in Sendai where additional provisions for preparing for and addressing displacement as part of disaster recovery were removed from earlier drafts of the negotiated SFDRR text.⁹ Nevertheless, thanks in good part to the work of the state-led Nansen Initiative on cross border displacement, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), civil society partners and positions taken by states including Bangladesh, Norway, the Philippines and Switzerland, the language retained provides a number of direct entry points for action.¹⁰

The SFDRR also articulates seven global targets (box 1).

BOX 1 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- 1) understanding disaster risk
- 2) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
- 3) investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
- 4) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

SEVEN GLOBAL TARGETS

To reduce...

- A) mortality
- B) the number of people affected
- C) direct economic loss
- D) damage to critical infrastructure and disruption to basic services

(comparing average losses between the period 2005-2015 and 2020-2030, relative to the size of a country’s population or economy)

...and to increase or enhance

- E) the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies
- F) international cooperation to developing countries
- G) the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people

Progress on each of these targets will play a part in preventing, minimizing and addressing displacement and its impacts. In a first step towards translating them into global action, an open-ended intergovernmental working group (OEIWG) of state-nominated experts was established by the UN General Assembly in June 2016 to develop “a set of possible indicators and terminology to measure global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework in coherence with the work of the inter-agency and expert group on sustainable development indicators [IAEG-SDGs]”. The work of the OEIWG was completed following a final formal session of the group in November 2016 and its recommendations, further discussed below, were endorsed by the UN General Assembly on 2 February 2017.¹¹

The meaning of “displacement”

Definitions

International use of the term “displaced” – and “internally displaced” people or persons (IDPs) in particular – derives from the widely recognised UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPs).¹² In line with international human rights and humanitarian law, and analogous with refugee law, the GPs set out the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of internally displaced people in all phases of displacement. It includes a descriptive definition of internally displaced

BOX 2 DEFINITIONS: “DISPLACED” AND “DISPLACEMENT”

A) The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998)

Internally displaced: “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or *natural or human-made disasters*, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border” (Paragraph 2, emphasis added)¹⁵

B) The Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda (2015):

“**Disaster displacement** refers to situations where people are forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of disaster, or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard” (Paragraph 16)

“[It] may take the form of spontaneous flight, an evacuation ordered or enforced by authorities or an involuntary planned relocation process. Such displacement can occur within a country [...] or across borders [...]” (Paragraph 18)¹⁶

C) UNISDR Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (2016):

Displaced: “Persons who, for different reasons and circumstances because of risk or disaster, have to leave their place of residence.”¹⁷

D) OEIWG on indicators and terminology’s proposed definition of “affected”:

Affected: “People who are affected, either directly or indirectly, by a hazardous event. Directly affected are those who have suffered injury, illness or other health effects; who were **evacuated, displaced, relocated** or have suffered direct damage to their livelihoods, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets.” (emphasis added)¹⁸

people - not to be confused with a legally defined status that is relevant to disaster contexts.

Core to the meaning of displacement is the notion of people being “forced or obliged” to leave their homes “as a result of or in order to avoid the effects” of “natural or human-made disasters”. In such contexts, “forced or obliged” is most commonly taken to mean forced by life-threatening circumstances (the threat or impact of hazardous events), or obliged by the orders of officials acting in the public interest, such as through the issuing of mandatory evacuation orders. A more recent definition of “disaster displacement” provided in the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, which was endorsed by 109 States in October 2015, is also derived from the core

notions in the GPs, as is a definition for “displaced” put forward by the UNISDR Scientific and Technical Advisory Group in 2016 (see box 2).

Sensitivities around the issue of displacement cropped up again in the negotiation of the global indicators during the OEIWG sessions in 2016, alongside more technical questions related to data availability and measurement. In spite of the increased prominence given to displacement in the SFDRR and support expressed by a number of states for a global displacement indicator under target B, consensus could not be reached on either a global indicator or displacement terminology in the updated DRR glossary and proposals were dropped.¹³

Target B has particular relevance as, unlike the other targets, it focuses the measurement of direct disaster impacts on the number of *people* affected, in line with the “people-centred” approach promoted by the SFDRR.¹⁴ Sub-indicators for this target include people affected by loss or damage to their health, homes or dwellings, and livelihoods. Though no global indicator is included for people who are displaced from their homes, affected populations are understood to include them, as acknowledged in the definition of “affected” provided in the updated DRR terminology (box 2). Furthermore, the indicators for people whose homes were destroyed or damaged provide a partial proxy for displacement, particularly in relation to the impact of earthquakes, as well as severe storms and floods in contexts where housing stock is not disaster resilient. With further analysis of the livelihoods data, IDMC may be able to address data gaps in relation to the displacement impacts of slow-onset disasters. The measurement of pre-emptive evacuations under Target G (discussed further below) may also provide additional displacement information.

Examining the text

Displacement is explicitly named in the SFDRR text preamble as an important part of the heavy toll that disasters have exacted worldwide, with reference to IDMC’s finding that:

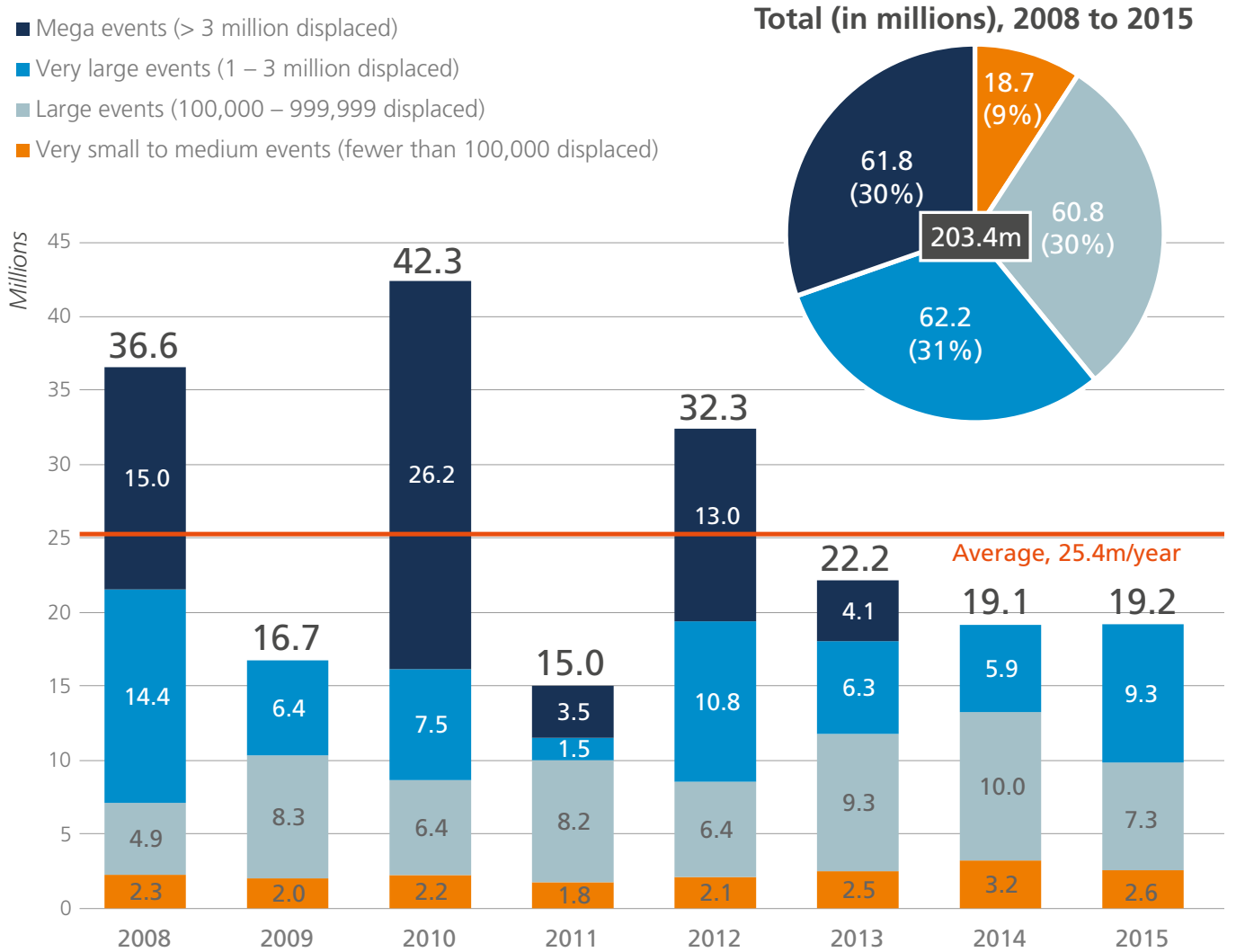
“[B]etween 2008 and 2012, 144 million people were displaced by disasters.” (SFDRR, Preamble, paragraph 4)¹⁹

The graph below shows IDMC’s 2008-2012 global estimates along with data on three further years of displacement to 2015, which draws on reported events in 160 countries. This accounts for an average of 25.4 million disaster displacements each year – equivalent to one person displaced every second. Mega and very large-scale displacements drive high variance in the global total from year to year while extensive smaller-scale displacements that occur more frequently are also included, if relatively poorly reported. It is widely agreed that the vast majority of people displaced by disasters remain within their own country, but these figures may also include some cross-border movements.²⁰

Government authorities have a responsibility to ensure that the risks associated with displacement are minimised where it becomes necessary and unavoidable

IDMC estimates do not encompass the full scope of disasters covered by the SFDRR, however. Importantly, they do not include the impacts of slow-onset disasters such as those

FIGURE 1: NEW RAPID-ONSET DISASTER DISPLACEMENTS BY SCALE OF EVENTS, 2008-2015



driven by agricultural drought, technological disasters (unless they are directly linked to a natural hazard event, or a so-called NaTech), nor epidemics and infestations, which would add substantially to the totals.

Under priority four, “enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to ‘Build Back Better’ in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction”, the SFDRR draws particular attention to the needs of displaced people living in temporary settlements, who may be unable to return to their former homes or who may wish to pursue local integration or settlement elsewhere.

“To promote the incorporation of disaster risk management into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes, [...] and integrate post-disaster reconstruction into the economic and social sustainable development of affected areas. This should also apply to temporary settlements for persons displaced by disasters” (Paragraph 33j)

Wide experience shows that the living conditions in temporary settlements are prone to deteriorate over time as solutions to displacement are delayed, the resources of displaced people are eroded, and external assistance declines. The chronic situation of some 55,000 people still displaced in camps in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) nearly six years after the 2010 earthquake disaster is a case in point.²¹ At the same time, the SFDRR does

not mention the situation of many displaced people who end up being temporarily sheltered by friends and family, sometimes for extended periods. Such people are less visible and their access to external assistance to meet basic needs and relieve the burden on host families and communities tends to be overlooked.²²

The SFDRR also highlights the role that “human mobility” more generally may play in strengthening the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets. Under the climate change discourse, this same idea is expressed through the framing of (voluntary) migration as a positive adaptation strategy undertaken by households or household members to avoid or mitigate against crisis and displacement after conditions and resources deteriorate.²³

“To encourage the adoption of policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities, in accordance with national laws and circumstances” (Paragraph 30i)

Displacement has a protective value when it removes people from immediate danger or reduces their exposure to harm. Government authorities have a responsibility to ensure that the risks associated with displacement are minimised

where it becomes necessary and unavoidable. This includes situations where people have to evacuate their homes for safer areas or relocate to new settlement sites when their current homes become uninhabitable or unsafe to live in, as further discussed below.

Relocation

Definitions

“Relocation” in the context of disaster risk reduction is a process of resettling people in alternative locations when their current home areas are deemed uninhabitable or when relocation is considered the best option to reduce vulnerability to the future risk of disasters. Some areas such as informal settlements located on unstable hillsides and flood plains may be inherently unsafe, while disasters may render former home areas uninhabitable, or it may be too costly to provide safety to a community in their current location. As implied by the definition of “relocated” people proposed during the OEIWG sessions by UNISDR (see box 3), relocations may be the only alternative for people who are already displaced “due to a hazardous event” and unable to return. This phrasing puts the focus on situations following a disaster, such as the coastal “buffer zone” policy applied in Sri Lanka following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami that required the resettlement of thousands of mostly fisher folk households inland.²⁴

On the other hand, the necessity for relocation may concern people living in disaster-prone areas who are not currently displaced. It may not be a single event that renders homes uninhabitable (intensive risk), but rather the cumulative impacts of multiple losses and repeated displacement by frequent, less extreme events (extensive risk) or gradual environmental degradation. The flooding of 80 per cent of Iloilo City after Typhoon Frank hit the western Visayas of the Philippines in 2008 was an extreme event, but a situation faced every year during the monsoon season by the urban poor who lived on Iloilo’s river banks. The relocation of affected families was not just a response to this latest typhoon, but benefitted from a flood control plan and the assignment of land previously acquired to address the exposure of poor households.²⁵ In western Alaska (US), warmer temperatures are melting permafrost, decreasing Arctic sea ice and the coastline is rapidly eroding, leaving the native communities of Kivalina, Newtok and Shishmaref in a dire situation and increasingly vulnerable to storms and floods. They have decided to relocate their entire communities, found land to move to and requested government assistance, but government agencies lack the mandate and mechanisms to provide technical and financial support which is hindering any progress.²⁶

It may not be a single event that renders homes uninhabitable (intensive risk), but rather the cumulative impacts of multiple losses and repeated displacement [...] (extensive risk)

Though intended as a protective measure, relocating people or entire communities can entail serious risks for those it is intended to benefit if not carried out with full respect for their human rights and dignity. This includes close community

BOX 3 DEFINITIONS: “RELOCATION” AND “RELOCATED”

A) UNHCR, Brookings Institution, Georgetown University guidance on planned relocations, October 2015:

Planned relocation is “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”.³¹

B) OEIWG working definition (as of 4 November 2016. Not retained in the final report.)

“Relocated: The number of people who moved permanently from their homes to new sites due to a hazardous event.”³²

C) OEIWG final report, DRR terminology:

Under “Disaster risk management”: **“Corrective disaster risk management** activities address and seek to remove or reduce disaster risks which are already present and which need to be managed and reduced now. Examples are the retrofitting of critical infrastructure or **the relocation of exposed populations or assets.**”³³ (Added emphasis)

See also reference to “relocated” in the OEIWG definition of “affected” (Box 2)

participation in the selection and design of the relocation site and ensuring adequate provision for infrastructure investment and access to livelihoods and basic services.²⁷ Relocation usually carries high costs that are often under-budgeted, and involve long and complex planning and implementation. For some communities, including indigenous peoples, the attachment to ancestral lands is central to their cultural identity and heritage, making any decision to leave it profoundly difficult. For these reasons, both the communities affected and government authorities undertake it solely as a measure of last resort.

For DRR actors, relocation is far from a new issue. Nevertheless, the Hyogo Framework made no mention of the relocation of human settlements (people and assets), while it is raised in the SFDRR once and for the first time as a disaster risk governance matter that aims to protect people whose homes are located in hazard-prone areas. The global indicators do not include a measure of relocations as a protective DRR measure nor as a displacement impact on people affected by disasters, however.²⁸ Nor were definitions of the terms ‘relocation’ or ‘relocated’ retained in the final DRR terminology adopted.

As for 'displaced', the term 'relocated' is included under the DRR terminology definition for "affected" (see box 2) and relocation is also cited as an example of a "corrective risk management" activity that addresses and seeks "to remove or reduce disaster risks which are already present and which need to be managed and reduced now".²⁹ Recent guidance developed by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Brookings Institution and Georgetown University includes a useful definition of the term "planned relocation" (see box 3), which is the term used in the Cancun Adaptation Framework adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.³⁰

Examining the text

Given their poor track record of success, relocations should be avoided wherever possible. Nevertheless, they may become an increasingly necessary measure in some regions and public policies are needed to guide their design and implementation. The SFDRR text alludes to public policies such as on land use and zoning that prevent the (re)building and settlement of homes in areas where disaster risk is high:

"To formulate public policies, where applicable, aimed at addressing the issues of prevention or relocation, where possible, of human settlements in disaster risk-prone zones, subject to national law and legal systems" (**Paragraph 27k**)

It also includes an important reference to integrating disaster risk assessments into land use policy, "including land degradation assessments" that would capture slow-onset disasters, and help to inform decisions on when and whether to undertake relocations, and to avoid or minimise the creation of displacement risk and the need for such relocations in future.

"To promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk assessments into land-use policy development and implementation, including urban planning, land degradation assessments and informal and non-permanent housing, and the use of guidelines and follow-up tools informed by anticipated demographic and environmental changes" (**Paragraph 30f**)

Risk assessments, along with policies and processes that ensure respect for the rights of the households and communities concerned and their participation in planning and preparations, are critical to their success as a protective measure and to safeguard against relocation being enforced by government authorities as an arbitrary measure or forced eviction. A similar point may be made for evacuations, as discussed in the next section.

Evacuation

Definitions

Evacuations are also a form of displacement: they are situations where people are forced or obliged to leave their homes to seek safety elsewhere because of the imminent threat or impact of disaster. This may seem counter intuitive because they are undertaken as a protective measure that is

BOX 4 DEFINITIONS: "EVACUATION" AND "EVACUATED"

A) IOM/Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, 2014³⁶

"**Evacuation** is the rapid movement of people away from the immediate threat or impact of a disaster to a safer place of shelter. It is commonly characterised by a short time frame, from hours to weeks, within which emergency procedures need to be enacted in order to save lives and minimise exposure to harm."

Evacuee [or evacuated person]: "A person who has evacuated a hazardous location in response to the immediate threat or impact of a disaster, either through their own initiative and resources (self-evacuated) or through the direction and assistance of authorities and/or emergency responders."

B) Report of the OEIWG³⁷:

Evacuation: "Moving people and assets temporarily to safer places before, during or after the occurrence of a hazardous event in order to protect them."

Annotations: "Evacuation plans refer to the arrangements established in advance to enable the moving of people and assets temporarily to safer places before, during or after the occurrence of a hazardous event. Evacuation plans may include plans for return of evacuees and options for shelter in place."

intended to save lives and minimise exposure to harm, whereas displacement is mostly understood as a negative consequence of disaster risk. The necessity for evacuations is, however, also a consequence of exposure and vulnerability to disaster and they are hugely disruptive.

Evacuations involving the mass movement of people within a short space of time carry their own risks that need to be minimised through planning and preparedness, including for the timely delivery of early warning. They are, therefore, as for relocations, usually undertaken as a necessary measure of last resort that "should not expose people in transit to more danger than if they had sheltered [*in situ*] from the danger".³⁴

People with specific vulnerabilities face higher risks during an evacuation such as older people, people with disabilities, people dependent on medical care, women with infants or who are pregnant, and children separated from their parents or guardians. Special assistance is needed to ensure that all can evacuate safely, including those people whose mobility may be limited without assistance. The impact of evacuations also depends on the conditions people encounter while they are displaced, how quickly they are able to voluntarily and safely return home, and the arrangements available for transitional shelter once emergency shelters such as schools, public buildings and places of worship are restored to their normal functions. This applies both to people displaced and host families or communities that provide many evacuees with shelter.³⁵

While there is no widely accepted definition for “evacuation”, “evacuated” or “evacuee”, one example is provided in guidance on planning for mass evacuations in the context of disasters. This guidance has been developed by IOM as lead agency for Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in disasters, in collaboration with civil protection and humanitarian actors and other experts (see box 4).

The updated DRR terminology includes a definition of “evacuation” (see box 4). This definition reflects the point that evacuations are usually prepared for with the assumption that they will be temporary, and that evacuees whose homes are located in evacuation zones will be able to return safely and voluntarily to their homes within a short time period. This definition is problematic, however, if it is used to guide data collection and measurement.

BOX 5 TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION, DISPLACEMENT RISK AND EVACUATIONS

In 2014, heavy rains triggered a landslide in Nepal that dammed the Koshi river, putting downstream communities both in Nepal and Bihar at high risk of flooding.³⁸ As Nepalese forces worked to clear the dam, the two governments shared regular updates that informed timely mass evacuations in both countries as a life-saving measure. This cooperation reduced the risks associated with displacement. Around 40,000 people were evacuated due to flooding in Nepal while 130,000 more pre-emptively evacuated in Bihar.³⁹

In another example, the Yacyretá Bi-national Entity (known by its Spanish acronym EBY), which manages the Yacyretá hydroelectric dam on the border between Argentina and Paraguay, opened its floodgates in response to rising water levels in the Paraná river in June 2014.⁴⁰ On another section of the river, the floodgates of the Itaipu hydroelectric dam, which is jointly managed by Brazil and Paraguay, were opened as well. The resulting water surge flooded homes in Paraguay and prompted evacuations in Argentina.⁴¹

Cooperation on regional tsunami warnings is critical to the timely and orderly evacuation of potentially flooded settlements and the mobilization of shelter provision and recovery assistance to people displaced from their homes.⁴² International and regional tsunami warning systems include the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) and the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWS), set up after the loss of some 250,000 lives across south and southeast Asia in the December 2004 Tsunami disaster.⁴³

Transboundary cooperation might also include the need for internal cooperation across administrative boundaries or jurisdictions and affected and non-affected areas within the same country. National responses need to be prepared to reach displaced people who scatter and move across different locations for short to longer periods of time. This should include provisions for access to shelter, basic services such as health and education, livelihoods and, potentially, support with integration outside their original home areas.

As seen in many disaster contexts the planning assumptions that evacuations are short-lived and temporary do not necessarily hold true and different people are affected by displacement in different ways. The collection of data on “evacuated” populations should not assume that *all* people are able to return home safely and quickly. Doing so creates the risk that some of those most in need of specific assistance related to their displacement, including people unable, unwilling or prohibited from returning to their former homes, will be overlooked and left behind as recovery and development move forwards.

As seen in many disaster contexts the planning assumptions that evacuations are short-lived and temporary do not necessarily hold true

Examining the text

SFDRR priority action four to “enhance[e] disaster preparedness for effective response” recognises the importance of planning for evacuations in response to the threat or impact of disaster in exposed areas and the needs of evacuated or displaced people. This includes their access to safe shelter and other essential assistance and protection while they are displaced. Specific mention is made in the text of both community preparedness – including evacuation drills – as well as the preparedness of local authorities, through measures to strengthen their capacity to manage evacuations.

“To promote regular disaster preparedness, response and recovery exercises, including evacuation drills, training and the establishment of area-based support systems, with a view to ensuring rapid and effective response to disasters and related displacement, including access to safe shelter, essential food and non-food relief supplies, as appropriate to local needs” (Paragraph 33h)

“To strengthen the capacity of local authorities to evacuate persons living in disaster-prone areas” (Paragraph 33m)

Evacuation is also addressed under priority two of the SFDRR – strengthening disaster risk governance – where reducing displacement risk is linked with the importance of “transboundary cooperation”. In regional watershed areas, actions taken upstream in one country may impact countries downstream. The potential to create or reduce disaster risk across riparian countries makes early warning systems, preparedness for well-managed and timely evacuations, investment in preventative measures such as the maintenance of embankments and drainage systems, and minimising the negative social and environmental impacts of development projects such as dams a shared responsibility.

“To promote transboundary cooperation to enable policy and planning for the implementation of ecosystem-based approaches with regard to shared resources, such as within river basins and along coastlines, to build resilience and reduce disaster risk, including epidemic and displacement risk” (Paragraph 28d)

Conclusion: Towards the Global Platform

Disaster-related displacement is well recognised as a matter for DRR in the Sendai Framework and, while missing from its global indicators, displacement is a reality for most of the governments who have adopted it. In disaster-affected countries and communities worldwide, displacement is a strong people-centred marker of where increased efforts are needed to reduce exposure and vulnerability. Integrating displacement risk and impacts in national DRR policy and measures promotes coherence across multiple ministry or agency mandates as it spans both emergency and longer-term action needed to avoid and reduce further risk creation and enable sustainable solutions. This also promotes mutually reinforcing outcomes and efficiencies in data collection and reporting demands under other global policy agendas where displacement is recognised as an important issue: the Paris Agreement on climate change, the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Humanity, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴⁴

Displacement is a strong people-centred marker of where increased efforts are needed to reduce exposure and vulnerability

As implementation of the SFDRR moves forward, global and regional progress against its targets will be monitored in biennial cycles with reporting reviewed and validated by Member States, and regional platforms taking place in alternate years. The next biennial Global Platform conference on disaster risk reduction in May 2017 in Mexico will convene the first international DRR community review of progress since the Sendai Framework's adoption. In Mexico, the prototype infrastructure for an online Sendai Framework Monitor will be presented for validation, together with a "readiness review" of data availability and baselines by Member States, while UNISDR will provide regional and global analysis of achievements against both global and national targets.

Strengthening the capacity and coordination between different national to local agencies responsible for data collection and reporting [...] is key

The SFDRR commitments have the potential to mobilise sorely needed efforts to collect improved data on displacement situations as evidence for policy and action. At national level, next steps to translate the global framework into knowledge and action will include retrofitting and building new national disaster loss databases to capture data necessary for global reporting, as well as the development of nationally appropriate targets and indicators. Given the importance of minimising and addressing disaster displacement to progress on DRR in countries, displacement should be included in national indicators to inform policy measures tailored to diverse contexts. Systematic collection, management and accessibility to high quality displacement-related data must be prioritised, including the significant gap in data on slow-onset disasters.⁴⁵

Strengthening the capacity and coordination between different national to local agencies responsible for data collection and reporting, including national statistical offices, is

key to this challenge. Methodological guidance adapted to national contexts should be developed and support provided to strengthen the collection of systematic disaster displacement data. At the same time, there is a wealth of experience and knowledge on challenging issues such as managing relocations and displacement data collection among member states such as Mexico and the Philippines. Increasing awareness and knowledge sharing on approaches to displacement data collection and displacement-related risks would do much to enable the translation of the Sendai Framework's commitments and aspirations into concrete action.

NOTES

1. Multiple requests were made by members of the OEIWG on global indicators and terminology during informal and formal sessions of the group over the course of 2016, as observed by IDMC and reported by the chair and UNISDR.
2. Yonetani, M. et al, Global Estimates 2015: People displaced by disasters, IDMC, July 2015, available at <https://goo.gl/Hu9nwt>
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This briefing paper is authored by Michelle Yonetani, IDMC's Senior Strategic Advisor on Disasters.

Michelle Yonetani
Senior Strategic Advisor on Disasters
+41 22 552 36 37
michelle.yonetani@idmc.ch

IDMC
NRC, 3 rue de Varembé, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
www.internal-displacement.org
+41 22 552 3600
info@idmc.ch