



MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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IOM'S VISION ON MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The vision of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is that the governance, policy and contemporary practice of migration should reflect the importance of environmental factors, natural disasters and climate change in human mobility. In the same way, environmental factors must be integrated in all areas of migration management.

WHAT FUNCTION DOES THE IOM FULFILL?

As the UN Migration Agency, IOM is a key player in the management of migration induced by climate change and is committed to develop initiatives in the areas of capacity building, formulation of public policies, research and execution of activities related to migration for environmental and climatic reasons.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE IOM IN THE MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS?

- Prevent forced migration that results from environmental factors as much as possible;
- Provide assistance and protection to the affected populations under conditions of forced migration and seek durable solutions to their situation;
- Facilitate migration as a strategy to adapt to climate change and improve the resilience of affected communities.

Only in 2017, there were 18.8 million internal displacements (this is, without crossing borders) caused by disasters around the world. Of these, 96% were caused by weather and meteorological disasters such as storms, floods, wildfires and drought (IDMC GRID, 2018¹). A World Bank study shows that, by 2050, climate change would force internal displacement of 17 million people in Latin America (World Bank, 2018²).

1 Global Report on Internal Displacement, GRID 2018. Norwegian Refugee Council.

2 Internal Climate Migration in Latin America. Policy Note #3. 2018. Groundswell: Preparing for internal climate migration in Latin America. World Bank.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular is a global cooperation framework, non-legally binding, that articulates a common group of commitments, on the basis of 23 objectives, in order to aim States to respond to the challenges and opportunities of international migration. The text contains multiple references to migration caused by environmental reasons. Most of them are within the objective No. 2: “to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that force people to leave their country of origin”; which contains a section entitled: “Natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation”³

CLIMATE CHANGE IN CHILE

Chile is a country of high vulnerability to climate change, since it has low-elevation coastal areas; arid, semi-arid and forest areas; susceptibility to natural disasters, sectors prone to drought and desertification, urban areas with problems of air pollution and mountain ecosystems such as the Chilean Coast Range and the Andean Mountains. In addition, the central zone limits to the north with the desert of Atacama, the most arid desert of the world.

Climatic projections for the national territory suggests an increase on population vulnerability due to climatic reasons in two scenarios: in the northern zone an increase in continental temperatures is expected, especially towards the Andean Mountains and the Altiplano; while in the Center-South zone a decrease in rainfall is expected (Garreaud, 2011⁴). Along with the drought, a negative impact is predicted in the agricultural sector both in the Norte Chico and in Central Chile, due to the irrigation deficit and increase in the costs of infrastructure implementation for adaptation (ECLAC, 2009⁵).

The National Plan of Climate Change, in force for the period 2017-2022, summarizes the planned initiatives towards mitigation and adaptation to climate change, but does not incorporate issues related to human mobility⁶. The National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change⁷, approved by the Sustainability and Climate Change Ministry Council in December 1, 2014; and sent to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change database, includes limited references related to migration and relocalization of agricultural activities.

Based on this background, IOM-Chile has established as a priority objective to articulate initiatives and strategies with the Government of Chile, local governments, other agents of civil society, agencies of the United Nations System, and other cooperation agencies, in order to install this topic in the national debate on adaptation to climate change.

As part of the activities executed and in execution by IOM in Chile in relation to this issue are:

- The elaboration of a local study in Monte Patria municipality, Region of Coquimbo, about the relationship between migration, environment and climate change, as part of a regional analysis in five countries of South America.
- Articulation of an intersectoral work agenda (international, governmental and civil organizations) with diverse key actors in matters related to adaptation to climate change.
- Permanent collaboration with the National Emergency Office of the Ministry of the Interior (ONEMI) in the context of the implementation of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Workshop on “Migration, Environment and Climate Change in South America” (2014), in coordination with the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed at training officials and professionals of South American governments on migration caused by the environment and climate change.

³ Web site: <<http://rosanjose.iom.int/site/es/blog/10-claves-del-pacto-mundial-sobre-migraci-n-relacionadas-con-el-medioambiente>>.

⁴ Garreaud, R. (2011). Cambio Climático: Bases físicas e impactos en Chile. Revista Tierra Adentro, 93, 13-19.

⁵ La Economía del Cambio Climático en Chile. 2009.

⁶ Plan de Acción Nacional de Cambio Climático. 2017.

⁷ Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático. 2014.