

Declaration on Climate Induced Displacement

Context: We know that climate change is already resulting in communities having to relocate due to changing weather patterns, rising sea levels and more frequent and catastrophic events. This climate-induced displacement is likely to affect growing numbers of people, and they will have particular protection needs. Yet, current international norms and practices do not stipulate what rights those displaced by climate change will have or how they should be treated. In 2016, world leaders began a process towards a new 'Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration' to be agreed in September 2018. We believe that using International Civil Society Week (ICSW) 2017 in Suva, Fiji, provides a unique opportunity to highlight the importance of these issues, discuss ways to deal with climate-induced displacement and influence policymakers as they negotiate the Global Compact. We also believe that it will be a unique opportunity for civil society and affected Pacific Island governments to work together and agree a set of principles around climate-induced displacement, and launch a Declaration on Climate-Induced Displacement.

Rationale: Holding ICSW in Suva, Fiji, is an important opportunity to bridge local and regional efforts related to key intergovernmental and multilateral engagements on climate change, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23) in Bonn (chaired by Fiji). After the UN negotiations, civil society leaders from around the world will meet in Suva, Fiji, to see for themselves how climate change is depriving people of their basic rights and resources. In addition to the current, high-profile climate-induced crises affecting people around the world – from hurricanes in the Americas to drought in East Africa and floods in South Asia – this first-hand experience will highlight the importance of supporting a holistic approach that considers how to support people who are displaced or migrating due to climate change, or residing in high-risk environments. Pacific Island States in Oceania are at particular risk from global practices that contribute to climate change. The international community has a responsibility to adopt a human rights based approach in tackling climate change and resultant migration patterns.

Objectives: Ultimately, we hope to create an influential support base to advocate for the inclusion of provisions related to climate-induced displacement in the global compact on migration. Our approach to achieving this objective seeks to (a) build broad-based coalitions that bridge sectors and thematic interests; and (b) highlight the intersectionality of climate change and human rights.

Key Activities: We will create a work package not only for drafting a declaration, but also for organising and mobilising people to take action on the issue of climate induced displacement.

Specific activities will include:

- creating a reference group to draft declaration and mobilise high-profile, multi-stakeholder group of founding signatories;
- presenting the declaration at ICSW 2017 with call to support;
- presenting case studies on climate migration and identifying key trends between displacement and human rights infractions;
- organising a #WalkTogether for climate justice march following the presentation of the declaration;
- complementing ICSW 2017-related activities with a virtual communication strategy; and
- presenting the declaration at the intergovernmental conference on international migration.

Reference Group: The declaration will be drafted with the participation of the following actors, who will also act as founding signatories and/or mobilise the support of those within their networks.

- CIVICUS/PIANGO
- Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice
- The Elders
- Pacific Island Development Forum
- Bread for the World
- Oxfam Pacific
- 350.org