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Update on displacement crisis

July 2019 – February 2020

Following the Andaman Sea crisis in 2015, the ADFM has had a strong focus on the displacement of the Rohingya from Rakhine State in Myanmar. This focus intensified after the events of 25 August 2017 and the resulting exodus of more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh; around 500,000 of whom arrived within the first month.¹ In March 2018, it was proposed at the sixth ADFM meeting that the Secretariat conduct an assessment of the risk of human trafficking, migrant smuggling and related exploitation arising from the displacement crisis in Cox's Bazar. The proposed assessment was subsequently endorsed and encouraged by several UN agencies, including UNHCR, IOM, ILO and UNODC, as well as the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process.

After receiving this endorsement, the ADFM Secretariat scoped the research exercise in consultation with key stakeholders and advisers; presented to and gained feedback from Bali Process Senior Officials at Ad Hoc Group and Ministerial meetings in June and August 2018; compiled existing data and literature and developed a risk assessment framework. A team of researchers travelled to Dhaka and Cox's Bazar in September/October 2018 to speak with over 180 stakeholders. Feedback on the draft report was received at the seventh ADFM meeting in Bangkok in November 2018, and the assessment report, *Avoiding a Crisis Within a Crisis*, was ultimately published in March 2019.

More than two years on from the initial influx, both affected governments remain committed to voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of displaced persons, however to date progress has been slow. Irregular movements by sea and land are also continuing. This brief will outline developments since the last ADFM meeting in June 2019.

Context:

The recent adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by most states in the region provides a new collaborative context within which to work on shared migration challenges. All states in the region have joined the GCR, and most have also acceded to the GCM. Since the latest displacement crisis began, there have been two attempts to begin the formal repatriation process: in November 2018 and August 2019, however neither process resulted in significant returns.² As of January 2020, approximately 600 Rohingya refugees have returned to Myanmar, according to official sources. Overseas, the protection environment is shrinking for Rohingya living in Saudi Arabia and India. There is also growing concern that India's new Citizenship Amendment Act may lead to further displacement impacting Bangladesh and the region. News reporting of mixed movements over land and sea from both Myanmar and Bangladesh continues, although not at the scale seen during the Andaman Sea crisis.

Update on Rakhine State/Myanmar:

The ADFM recognises that the resolution to the current crisis lies in the voluntary, safe, dignified and durable repatriation of the Rohingya to their former homes in Rakhine State. The Government of Myanmar faces significant challenges in Rakhine State, notably maintaining law and order due to ongoing armed conflict between the Arakan Army and the military, which has created significant instability.³ This conflict has further restricted

¹ Sumbul Rizvi (2018) 'The Rohingya influx: One year on' *Inter-Sector Coordination Group*, 26 August.

² Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Information, 'Repatriation of Displaced Persons from Bangladesh did not occur as scheduled' 23 August 2019; Government of Bangladesh, Press Release: Inputs for Media on Diplomatic Briefing by HFM on Rohingya Repatriation State Guest House Padma, 29 August 2019, https://mofa.gov.bd/site/press_release/558b1cfe-aa6c-4a6e-af08-b0415d7e0e8f/.

³ Statement by H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as Agent before the International Court of Justice (The Hague, 11 December 2019), para 31,

access for government and international organisations and has led to temporary internet restrictions and increased internal displacement, making it harder for all those in Rakhine State, including remaining Rohingya, to access information and communicate with family and friends. Restoring peace and stability in Rakhine State should remain a priority.

On 23 January 2020, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that “the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable” and unanimously ordered that Myanmar “take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II” of the Genocide Convention.⁴ The ICJ ruling was handed down two days after Myanmar’s Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) released its executive summary, finding that war crimes, not genocide, had been committed in Rakhine State.⁵ Other legal processes relating to the treatment of the Rohingya are also ongoing: at the International Criminal Court, in Argentina and through the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar. It is unclear what impact these legal processes will have on Myanmar domestic politics in the lead up to the 2020 election, or on the mood in the camps in Cox’s Bazar.

A high-level delegation from Myanmar led by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar visited Cox’s Bazar on 27-28 July 2019 for a second time to discuss repatriation. As a follow-up of this visit, a delegation led by a Director-General of the Myanmar Foreign Ministry accompanied by the ASEAN-ERAT team and the AHA Centre visited Cox’s Bazar from 18 to 19 December 2019 to speak with displaced persons on the progress of the preparation work for the repatriation and resettlement.⁶ These visits are a positive development, however subsequent efforts to begin the process have been unsuccessful.

Update on Cox’s Bazar/Bangladesh:

The ADFM welcomes the recent announcement by the Government of Bangladesh that it will allow access to education using the Myanmar curriculum for children under 14 in the refugee camps, starting with a pilot program of 10,000 children in grades 6 to 9, and more skills development opportunities for adolescent and youth.⁷ This is a positive policy shift that will not only build the children’s skills and resilience and provide them with a greater sense of hope for the future, but would also work to diminish the risks of trafficking and exploitation in the camps, as well as the potential for radicalisation. Education and skills development opportunities will help to prepare the children in the camps for their eventual voluntary repatriation to Rakhine State, and integration into the national education system, once conditions there are safe to do so in a dignified and sustainable way.

The 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP) is still being developed and is expected to be released soon. At the end of December 2019, that year’s JRP was only 69% funded, with the protection sector the fourth highest funded sector at 44% of requested funding. In Cox’s Bazar, the creation of an Anti-Trafficking Working Group within the

<https://www.mofa.gov.mm/statement-by-h-e-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-state-counsellor-and-union-minister-for-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-as-agent-before-the-international-court-of-justice-the-hague-1/>

⁴Application of the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar) (23 January 2020) paras 72 and 79, pp. 21-23. Myanmar has taken note of the decision and denied genocide took place in Rakhine. Ministry of Foreign Affairs ‘Press Statement on the decision by the ICJ on ‘provisional measures’ in the case brought by The Gambia against Myanmar’ (23 January 2020).

⁵ Myanmar President’s Office, Executive Summary of Independent Commission of Enquiry – ICOE Final Report (21 January 2020), accessible <https://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=briefing-room/news/2020/01/21/id-9838>

⁶ Myanmar Foreign Ministry (2019), “*The Myanmar Delegation led by the Director-General of the International Organizations and Economics Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs met with displaced persons at Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh*”.

Available at: <https://www.mofa.gov.mm/the-myanmar-delegation-led-by-the-director-general-of-the-international-organizations-and-economics-department-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-met-with-displaced-persons-at-coxs-bazar-ban/> (Accessed on: 5-2-2020)

⁷ Dhaka Tribune (2020) ‘Bangladesh allows education for Rohingya refugee children’ 28 January, https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/01/28/bangladesh-allows-education-for-rohingya-refugee-children?fbclid=IwAR3rJorEvgxM0qceRvcCPKACnQ-LgAOaeKBNitJHVZ_thwbytrWCySK9pVg

Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar is a welcome move, and in line with the recommendation made in the ADFM's report *Avoiding a Crisis Within a Crisis*.

Other developments in Cox's Bazar that have taken place since the last ADFM meeting include the erection of fences around some camps, and limiting access to 3G and 4G networks as well as access to cash-for-work programs.⁸ *Avoiding a Crisis Within a Crisis* outlined the risks inherent in a securitised response to the Rohingya displacement. Finally the development of concrete housing on the recently emerged island of Bhasan Char has continued, and the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) announced in January 2020 that the island was "ready for habitation."⁹ Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has repeatedly stated that no refugees will be forced to relocate to the island.

Update on situation for children:

Children comprise over half of the population of refugees and displaced people worldwide, and this is reflected in the camps in Cox's Bazar where approximately 55% of the population is under 18. The Global Refugee Forum, held for the first time in Geneva in December 2019, had a major focus on access to education for refugees. 2019 was also the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Bangladesh and Myanmar are both parties.

As noted above, the ADFM welcomes the recent move by the Government of Bangladesh to begin a pilot allowing Rohingya children in the refugee camps to access formal education using the Myanmar curriculum. In Myanmar, ongoing conflict and restrictions on freedom of movement in Rakhine State limit access to education and healthcare for Rohingya children, as do restrictions on accessing higher education without citizenship, and poor teacher attendance in schools meant to serve Rohingya communities.¹⁰

In Cox's Bazar, the presence of approximately half a million boys and girls under the age of 18 living in and around the camps poses significant challenges for birth registration, as well as protection risks including human trafficking and child, early and forced marriage. Birth registration for refugees and the Bangladeshi community in Cox's Bazar has been on hold since the large influx of Rohingya refugees to the area in 2017, having significant impacts on the host community there.

Update on regional response:

The ADFM advocates for improved regional responses to forced migration challenges, including the Rohingya displacement. The role of regional fora in responsibility-sharing and finding sustainable solutions, including through complementary pathways, was also reaffirmed in the GCR.

⁸ Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed confirmed that erection of barbed wire fencing had begun in Ukhia, Kutupalong and Nayapara, Teknaf on 24 November 2019, as reported in the Dhaka Tribune: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/11/24/army-chief-barbed-wire-fencing-of-rohingya-camps-is-in-process>. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission ordered restricted access to 3G and 4G in Teknaf and Ukhia, as reported in The Daily Star on 10 September 2019: <https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/3g-4g-services-restricted-ukhia-teknaf-until-further-notice-1798249>.

⁹ "Bhasan Char is ready for habitation. Everything has been put in place," Bangladesh refugee, relief and repatriation commissioner Mahub Alam Talukder told The Associated Press', see Julhas Alam (2020) 'Bangladesh says once-submerged island ready for Rohingya' 17 January, *Associated Press*, <https://apnews.com/9704ae63b1e0106ad6d82ddaaafc322c>.

¹⁰ Recommendation 19 of Myanmar's ICOE report states: "Myanmar Government must review the education sector in Northern Rakhine State including formal, non-formal education and vocational training focusing on inclusion, diversity and the use of online and offline learning. The principle of equitable access is essential to the delivery of education, health and other services." Executive Summary, Independent Commission of Enquiry, Republic of the Union of Myanmar President Office, <https://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=issues/rakhine-state-affairs/id-9840>, p. 14.

In November 2019, Bali Process Co-Chairs made their second ‘good offices’ visit to Dhaka and Nay Pyi Daw. The ADFM welcomes the opportunity these visits posed as a means of sustaining focus on the response and identifying practical assistance for the affected states. However, while the Consultation Mechanism has been activated and at least two ‘good offices’ visits undertaken, the impact and effectiveness of Bali Process activities in response to this displacement crisis remain unclear.

ASEAN’s engagement on the issue of the Rohingya repatriation remains primarily focused on humanitarian and development needs. At its Bangkok Summit in November 2019, ASEAN established an Ad-Hoc Support Team to facilitate repatriation and reaffirmed its support for “a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar in providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process and promoting sustainable development in Rakhine State”¹¹ The statement also reaffirmed the “need to find a comprehensive and durable solution to address the root causes of the conflict.” More recently, on 30 January 2020, a meeting on ASEAN-UN Cooperation was held at the UN Security Council in New York, where UN Secretary General António Guterres remarked: “ASEAN’s engagement on the situation in Myanmar’s Rakhine State has enormous importance for the United Nations... Our strengthened cooperation with ASEAN is crucial in helping to advance concrete steps in line with humanitarian principles and the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.”¹²

For consideration by ADFM members:

The priorities for action identified in the ADFM’s trafficking risk assessment *Avoiding a Crisis Within a Crisis*, remain a valuable framework for addressing the risks of trafficking, smuggling and exploitation, and for pursuing a long-term solution to the displacement. More can be done to achieve conditions which are conducive to achieving safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya, respecting the landmark agreements made between the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh.

1. Secure a durable solution

As the displacement stretches into its third year, the Government of Myanmar should scale up efforts to demonstrate tangible progress in establishing conditions that are conducive to safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable repatriation. Such tangible progress would include providing documentation, ensuring freedom of movement, and ending discriminatory policies that deny access to services including education and healthcare. Working to restore stability and an end to the conflict is also an important priority.

2. Support development on both sides of the border through a cross-border development plan benefiting both the displaced and local communities

The ADFM continues to advance its proposal for a cross-border development initiative, addressing the needs of refugee and host communities in Bangladesh, and all ethnic groups in Rakhine State, including through improved access to education and livelihoods. All development should be undertaken sensitively and in consultation with all affected stakeholders, in such a way that does not inhibit repatriation or further incentivise exclusion or persecution of the Rohingya.

3. Maintain focus on the issue and renew support for the humanitarian response on the ground

Support to the humanitarian response on the ground and focus on the crisis must be maintained. There is a need for reinvigorated funding to the JRP, as well as expanded medium-term support to show solidarity to and alleviate the burden on the Government of Bangladesh. It is also important that the Rohingya living in the camps are not subject to unnecessary restrictions that would further undermine security in the camps.

¹¹ Chairman’s Statement of the 35th ASEAN Summit, Bangkok/Nonthaburi, 3 November 2019, para 37, p. 12.

¹² António Guterres (2020) ‘Remarks to the Security Council on ASEAN-UN Cooperation’, United Nations Secretary-General, 30 January, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-01-30/remarks-security-council-asean-un-cooperation>.

4. Strengthen counter-trafficking efforts on both sides of the border

Now that immediate needs such as shelter and food are largely provided for in the camps, greater focus can be given to protection concerns, particularly counter trafficking efforts. Support to the Government of Bangladesh in implementing its National Plan of Action on trafficking (2018-2022) ahead of its mid-term implementation review in 2020 will be valuable, as would similar support to capacity building on the Myanmar side of the border. The ADFM encourages further research into the links between the displacement and the risks of human trafficking, migrant smuggling and related exploitation in both Cox's Bazar and Rakhine State.

5. Strengthen education efforts on both sides of the border

Support is needed to ensure the success of the education pilot in the camps in Bangladesh so that it leads to expanded educational opportunities for refugee children and youth, and significantly reduces trafficking and other protection risks. There should also be a concurrent focus on restoring education to Rohingya and other communities in Rakhine State, including by developing a plan for inclusive education across the state and ensuring that teachers reach all communities.

6. Boost refugee preparedness for repatriation

Building on the good work already being done in Cox's Bazar, including through the recently announced education pilot, further preparatory activities to boost refugee resilience and preparedness for sustainable repatriation worth considering include: equipping refugees with documentation, developing technical and professional skills including through access to livelihood and/or temporary work opportunities, and providing access to updated information about areas of origin.

The ADFM's full risk assessment: *Avoiding a Crisis Within a Crisis*, and summary policy brief, both published in March 2019, are available [here](#).

Climate change and displacement: impact on the most vulnerable groups

The issues of ‘climate migration’ in general and climate change and disaster induced displacement in particular are increasingly becoming focus areas in global climate negotiations. The latest three reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) make extensive reference to the impacts of climate change on human displacement.¹ At COP 24 in 2018, state parties accepted recommendations prepared by the task force that was created by the Paris Agreement (under Loss and Damage) to avert, minimise and address the adverse impacts of climate change and disaster on displacement.² The Cancun Adaptation Framework (2010), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and other international instruments have also emphasised the need to tackle this daunting challenge both at the national and international levels.

This paper uses Bangladesh as a case study to look at displacement related to climate change, and particularly at its impact on vulnerable groups. The paper mostly draws from some recently conducted empirical research studies on Bangladesh. Important among them are: ‘*Climate change related migration in Bangladesh*’,³ *Deltas, vulnerability and climate change: migration and adaptation* (DECCMA)⁴ and ‘*Safe and sustainable cities*’⁵.

Bangladesh is often cited as one of the world’s most exposed countries to the impact of climate change. Lying at the foot of the three major rivers of South Asia and with only 10 percent of its land area lying above 1 metre of the mean sea level, climate shocks and stresses are predicted to result in increased flooding, drought, riverbank erosion and salinisation of water resources in the country. In the aftermath of these climatic events, the number of persons displaced will also increase. This paper attempts to understand the current nature and extent of climate related displacement in Bangladesh, tries to locate which groups of affected communities will be most vulnerable and what types of services will be required to support them. It also reviews how current policies look at this type of displacement.

The paper is divided in seven sections. Section 1 presents recent facts and figures on displacement both at the global level and in Bangladesh. Section 2 highlights regional variations of climate vulnerability of Bangladesh. Section 3 concentrates on vulnerabilities of different population groups in origin areas during both the pre-displacement and displacement periods. Section 4 identifies vulnerabilities of the displaced groups during the post-displacement period, particularly of those who move to cities. Section 5 explores the vulnerability of poor people to irregular migration and trafficking from areas which are facing negative effect of climate change. Section 6 reviews existing policies, then finally Section 7 draws conclusions and identifies some policy recommendations for future reforms to protect the rights of those who may be forcibly displaced as a result of climate change.

The paper is based on the understanding that climate change does not displace people directly, but rather exacerbates various forms of vulnerability which contribute to displacement (Kolmannskog, 2012). The paper draws from (Jayawardhan, 2017) studies which demonstrate that anthropogenic climate change affects most inhabitants of a community, yet socio-economic inequalities render marginalised groups more vulnerable to

¹ The IPCC Oceans and Cryosphere report, the IPCC land report and the IPCC 1.5-degree C special report.

² Decision 10/CP.24

³ A joint research of RMMRU and SCMR on climate change related migration in Bangladesh,(2012- 2014). This study looks into effect of climate change in intensifying vulnerabilities of affected persons of flood, cyclone and drought prone districts. The findings are presented in Siddiqui et al 2018, Martin et al 2014 and 2017.

⁴ DECCMA: Deltas, vulnerabilities and Climate change, (2013-2018). Findings on Bangladesh is available in De Campos et al 2019 and Siddiqui et al 2018.

⁵ Joint research of Exeter University and RMMRU on Safe and Sustainable cities: Securities, Migration and wellbeing, 2017-2019. Findings are available in Siddiqui et al forthcoming.

those affects. When vulnerability reaches a threshold point where life and livelihoods in origin areas become unsustainable, then people are forced to decide whether to leave. Individuals and communities displaced due to effects of climate change or other environmental and natural hazards, not only have to part with their habitual residences, but also often can suffer loss of life or livelihoods. Their social and economic wellbeing can be substantively compromised.

Section 1: Facts and figures

Over the last decade human displacement due to effects of climate change has seen a manifold increase. The mean of the last 11 years' displacement data of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) demonstrates that each year around 23.5 million people are internally displaced because of extreme weather conditions (IDMC, 2019). In 2017, 18.8 million people were displaced internally due to sudden onset disasters across 135 countries and territories. Of them, 8.6 million were displaced due to floods and 7.5 million were displaced due to sudden onset processes, like storms and tropical cyclones. In 2017, six of the top ten countries which experienced displacement due to disaster were found in Asia: China, Philippines, Cuba, United States, India, Bangladesh, Somalia, Vietnam, Ethiopia and Nepal. In 2018, sudden-onset hazards, particularly storms, led to the displacement of 17.2 million persons in 144 countries and territories. No estimate is available on the extent of displacement due to slow-onset disasters worldwide. Therefore, the total number of displaced persons in the world is likely to be much higher. The World Bank estimates that 140 million people across the sub Saharan-Africa, South-Asia and Latin America would be forced to move within their countries by 2050.⁶

A recent estimate on the extent of displacement in Bangladesh suggests that by 2050, one in every 7 people in the country will be forced to be displaced due to effect of climate change.⁷ A 2013 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study shows that population growth in environmentally fragile areas, especially on the coast, experience low population growth over last two decades compared to the national average. Based on the state of population movement between the census of 2001 and 2011, a 2013 RMRRU and SCMR study projected that even if population movement trends remain the same, from 2011 to 2050, as many as 16 to 26 million people will move out of their places of origin in Bangladesh due to rapid onset climate hazards.⁸ These flows would include both internal displacement and other forms of labour migration predominantly within the country.

IDMC data on past displacement in Bangladesh indicate that between 2008 and 2014 more than 4.7 million people had to move from their place of origin due to disasters.⁹ In 2017, in the global count of displaced populations, Bangladesh's was ranked 6th among 135 countries. IDMC also records that in 2018, about 1.7 million people were evacuated across 23 districts in Bangladesh, mostly from coastal areas.¹⁰

In 2014 the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme Phase II (CDMP II) conducted a nationally representative survey on the extent of displacement due to riverbank erosion, tidal flood, water logging, salinity, cyclones and storm surge. The study covered 14 rapid onset climate disaster facing districts. It finds that 12 percent of the population of those districts had experienced permanent displacement, 46 percent

⁶ World Bank (2018) *Groundswell: Preparing for internal climate migration*, World Bank, Washington DC.

⁷ Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme Phase II (CDMP II), 2014

⁸ Kniveton, D. Rowhani, P. Martin, M. (2013). *Future Migration in the Context of climate change*, Climate Change Related Migration in Bangladesh. Climate Change Related Migration in Bangladesh Briefing Paper No 3, Brighton: Sussex Centre for Migration Research (SCMR), Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU): Dhaka

⁹ IDMC. (2015). *Global Estimates 2015: People Displaced by Disasters*, IDMC: Geneva.

¹⁰ These coastal areas included Bagerhat, Barguna, Bhola, Chandpur, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Gopalgong, Khulna, Laxmipur, Noakhali, Patuakhali, Pirojpur and Satkhira. IDMC. (2019). *Mid Years Figures: Internal Displacement from January to June 2019*, IDMC: Geneva

experienced temporary displacement, 29 percent swung between temporary and permanent displacement and only 13 percent had never experienced any form of displacement.

Section 2: Nature of climate change related vulnerability in Bangladesh

Climate change effects are experienced by different parts of Bangladesh differently. *Displacement Solutions* identifies that the key driver of displacement in the coastal regions of Bangladesh is the increasing tidal water height (leading to tidal flooding), while tropical cyclones and storm surges are found to be secondary causes of displacement in the coastal areas.¹¹ Sea level rise due to climate change is anticipated to worsen many of these processes and to subsume up to 13 percent of Bangladesh's coastal land by 2080. The most critical and foreseeable impact of sea level rise is the salinity intrusion of cultivable land, soil and water affecting agro-based livelihoods of coastal population. This is therefore, one of the key triggers of displacement in coastal areas. On the other hand, riverbank erosion and river flooding are the key drivers of displacement in mainland regions. 80 percent of land area consists of floodplains of the major rivers including the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna, which are highly prone to flooding. In catastrophic years such as 1988, 1998 and 2004, more than 60 percent of the country, or an area of approximately 100,000 square kilometers, was inundated for a duration of nearly 3 months (CEGIS, 2013). In many parts of the country, such events led to multiple displacements.

Northwestern districts of Bangladesh face severe seasonal drought which also creates displacement.¹² Droughts are expected to be more frequent and severe due to climate change. Factors contributing to drought conditions include longer-term changes in rainfall patterns, over pumping of ground water, diversion of water upstream etc. Increasing intensity and duration of droughts over recent years have put major stresses on the livelihoods of people of this region. Traditionally, people of this region depend overwhelmingly on agriculture. A large section of the land cannot be cultivated in all seasons and the cost of cultivation has also grown as irrigation has become expensive.

Bangladesh is also prone to earthquakes as it is located amongst several active faults. The country stands on the northeastern corner of the Indian plate.¹³ Given that the country's seismic risk may be higher than previously recognized, with an active subduction zone and mega-thrust fault placing the region at risk of an earthquake. Earthquake would also create major displacement both in the urban and peri-urban areas.

The following two sections look into how different socio-economic groups experience the effects of climate change and what type of condition makes some section of the population more vulnerable to displacement than others.

Section 3: Vulnerable groups in origin areas

Loss of homes and arable land are major effects that people face in all climate stressed areas. People from the mainland can lose their homes from riverbank erosion and floods, whereas people in coastal areas like Satkhira; Bagerhat can lose their homestead during cyclones. People of coastal Chattogram can lose their homestead in flash floods. People who are from drought areas such Chapai Nawabganj and from hill areas of Chattogram Hill tracts have not experienced loss of homesteads. However, people from these areas face major difficulty in cultivating their arable land due to water shortage and depletion of ground water. RMMRU and SCMR (2013) finds that economic status has direct bearing on experience of homestead loss. It is the relatively poor people who mostly reside in areas closest to disaster risk, be it tidal floods or river erosion. They are the ones who

¹¹ Displacement Solutions. (2012). Climate Displacement in Bangladesh | The Need for Urgent Housing, Land and Property (1HLP) Rights Solutions, DS: Geneva.

¹² Habiba U., Hassan A.W.R., Shaw R., 2013.

¹³ There are two major structures relative to the plate boundary, namely the Dauki fault and the Indian-Burma plate boundary fault.

became virtually landless due to loss of land as well as home. Those who are economically better off often have alternative land to move to, or can afford to save their homes by raising the foundations of their houses. When responses are further divided between men and women, it appears that home and land loss was seen as the major problem by women, whereas men highlighted loss of arable land as the most important loss (Martin et al 2014).

Qualitative data from the RMMRU and SCMR survey also captured changes in the livelihoods of respondents over the past 40 years. The data show that before 1980, most interviewee households were subsistence farmers, share-croppers, agricultural labourers, fishermen, boatmen, potters, ironsmiths, wood cutters, or engaged in other forest based livelihoods such as honey or leaf collectors. Over the years, many of these professions have become extinct. Those who were in relatively better economic conditions were in a better position to diversify their livelihood and income sources, whereas poorer households, particularly those who became landless, enjoyed less opportunity to do this. In water-logged areas of Khulna and Satkhira, rich farmers could afford to buy seeds of salt-tolerant rice varieties that poor farmers could not. Again, the rich farmers could irrigate their land in drought-prone Chapai Nawabganj by paying higher prices, something their poor counterparts could not afford.

Gendered differences are also pronounced in respect to access to potable water and health services due to climate change. Women across all economic classes identified carrying potable water long distances as a problem during and in the aftermath of a disaster. They also identified water-borne and skin diseases as a major problem during and after disasters such as floods, cyclones etc. Lack of access to loans during and in the immediate aftermath of a disaster was identified by men as the major hindrance in their process of rehabilitation, whereas women identified access to relief and food as their major problem. Perhaps for this reason, Jayawardhan (2017) argued that it is the marginalised groups who often have the most difficulty adjusting to the effects that climate change brings on their lives. Similarly, Siddiqui et al (forthcoming) find that the challenges faced by male and female members of the displaced households are also different, as is explored below.

Section 4: Vulnerability of the displaced in the cities

Chattogram is the second largest city of Bangladesh and is an important business center of the country. Employment opportunities attract new migrants to this megacity as it hosts a port, garments other manufacturing industries and export processing zones (EPZs). Low-income migrants are concentrated in impoverished slums in low-lying and hill slopes of Chattogram. University of Exeter and RMMRU conducted a survey on the state of new climate induced new migrants in the slum areas of Chattogram city. The findings show that the vulnerability of new migrants varies on the basis of geographic location, ethnicity, gender and age (Siddiqui et al forthcoming). The survey covered 450 new migrant households in five areas of the city by using serpentine method of household listing. The sample areas represent slums, colonies in hill slopes and ghettos of hill ethnic communities close to the Export Processing Zone (EPZ). In the urban setting, they are still exposed to environmental hazards, face low access to urban services and endure sub-standard work conditions. The new internal migrants who moved to different parts of Chattogram city both from plains and hill districts identified a number of challenges, including inadequate and inhumane housing conditions, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, high rent and fear of eviction from illegal settlements. The fragility of livelihoods and income is an overarching threat, which defines the experiences of all migrants, whether it is male or female, or from plain or hill areas. More importantly, all groups of migrants feel powerless and unable to make their voices heard to the municipal authorities.

Again, gender differences are apparent in the experience of new migrants. Lack of privacy while bathing, long queues to access toilets and incidents of sexual harassments were top concerns of female migrants as well as

female members of male migrant households. Long working hours was a major concern of female garment workers. Migrant women, particularly working in the formal sector, complain about lack of childcare facilities. They feel that they have compromised health and safety of their children for work.

Issues related to housing and sanitation were not a priority concern for most male migrants. They more often raised work related anxieties. Men working in the formal sector were concerned about lack of tenure and fluctuating income. Men who work as street hawkers identified police harassment, demands for bribes and frequent eviction from roadside and footpaths as their major concerns. Those who work in waste collection suffer from skin disease and breathing problem. Primary and secondary education is free in Bangladesh yet children face problem in going to school as the roads are water logged for several months in a year. Children themselves identified, absence of playground, power cut during their study time, getting wet while commuting to school as their regular experience of growing up.

Migrants residing in established slums in low-lying areas of Chattogram experienced regular water logging, water borne diseases and low quality of public services such as safe drinking water, cooking gas and sanitation facilities. Both male and female migrants living in unauthorised settlements in hill slopes were worried about landslides during the monsoon season.

There is a distinct difference between migrants who come from the hills and those who are from the plains. Migrants from the plains expressed no problems in accessing religious and spiritual sites in new urban locations, be they Hindu or Muslim. In contrast, finding places for religious congregation is a major problem that the Buddhist hill community faces in a new urban location.

Section 5: Vulnerability to irregular migration

Bangladesh has a long history of participation in short-term international contract migration to Gulf, other Arab, and Southeast Asian countries, the majority of which is for work classified as low-skilled. Until 2010, people from climate change affected districts hardly participated in this market, due to an absence of government institutions and private recruiting agencies to facilitate international migration in these districts. The relatively high cost of international migration and lack of access to social networks also hinder the ability of poorer people to access international migration pathways. (Siddiqui, 2017). A number of empirical studies (CDMP II, 2013; RMMRU and SCMR, 2014; IOM, 2010;) have identified that the majority of migration flows from areas most affected by climate change were internal.

This being so, it is also true that climate change can render people from particular areas vulnerable to human trafficking, migrant smuggling and related exploitation. For example, in the Philippines increased rates of human trafficking were recorded in areas highly affected by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.¹⁴ Another example is found in the Andaman Sea, when in around 2010, irregular maritime routes through the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea began to increase. These informal journeys, initially largely comprised of Rohingya people, soon culminated in the development of a syndicate of human traffickers of Thai, Bangladeshi, Malay and Burmese origin. Gradually, the syndicate also targeted the Rohingya refugees residing in Bangladesh. Within a very short span of time, these syndicates also started luring Bangladeshis who aspired to migrate for work but could not afford to do so. They targeted adult males from those regions of the country that are not exposed to short-term international contract migration and consequently have little knowledge about the pitfalls of movement through the irregular route. Climate change affected regions fall into one of the major catchment areas. At that point of time, the average migration cost to different Bangladeshi labour market would vary from BDT 200,000 to BDT 400,000

¹⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council (2017) Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Bangkok, 6-7 November, E/ESCAP/GCM/REP/5, p. 8.

(\$2444 to 4888).¹⁵ The smugglers offered aspirant migrants a cost that was as low as BDT 10,000 to BDT 15,000 (\$122 to 183).

The discovery of illegal detention centres and mass graves in the Thai-Malaysia border in 2014 brought to the fore the worst cases of human trafficking of Bangladeshis and Rohingya. Based on newspaper reports of districts to which Bangladeshis returned from the detention camps of smugglers, RMMRU found that 66 percent of those victims were from the 19 climate hit districts of Bangladesh. This demonstrates that if effective adaptation measures are not in place, effects of climate change can create scope for trafficking and irregular migration.

A range of existing activities and initiatives in the region to support states, such as IOM's Technical Working Group on Human Mobility in the Pacific, and other similar initiatives including the Technical Working Group on Human Mobility in the Pacific, the Informal Working Group on Disaster Displacement and the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, are all useful initiatives for states to use to strengthen their capacity to prepare and respond to future climate related displacement challenges.

Section 6: Policies and laws

In Bangladesh, major national policies that deal with climate change and migration include the National Adaptation Action Plan (NAPA) 2009, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009, Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) and National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (NSMDCIID). The first two policies do not address the issue of displacement. SOD provides instructions to different actors at national and sub-national levels on managing displacement. However, the focus is overwhelmingly on the initial emergency shelter during the disaster. The other two phases of displacement, pre-displacement and post displacement is absent from the SOD. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) has drafted a National Strategy on the Management on Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement on the basis of UN Sendai Framework, UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as well as the 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. It is a rights-based document which covers all phases of displacement: prevention, protection during displacement and durable solutions. The Strategy is going through an inter-ministerial scrutiny process and is expected to be adopted soon.

The majority of the urbanisation policies continue to view rural-urban migration as a problem of development and treat it as the cause of widespread urban poverty. Some of these policies even call for relocation of the displaced back to their origin areas (National Housing Policy 2016). The draft National Urbanisation Policy 2014 is more open to rural-urban migration. However, urban experts see very little scope for adoption of the draft policy. The policy makers who deal with climate change are yet to absorb the reality that Bangladesh is rapidly becoming urbanised. By 2030, 44 percent of the population will be living in cities and by 2050 more than half the population will be living in the cities (GED, 2016). This is not only due to push factors such as climate change or poverty in rural areas; it is also due to pull factors such as demand for labour in urban growth centres. Therefore, urbanisation policies have to accommodate the need of the new migrants to attain SDG 11 on inclusive safe and sustainable cities.

Section 7: Conclusions and policy consideration

The paper demonstrates that effects of climate change are already contributing to creation of forced displacement within Bangladesh, and to a lesser extent across its borders. Relatively better off families can diversify their family income sources and adapt to changes affected by climate change related events. Generally

¹⁵ RMMRU, 2013

they can also afford relocation to other spaces when need arises, and they also have access to credit and social networks which help them adapt. It is the poorer community who face major hardship to cope with climate induced displacement. The poorer people often initially attempt to relocate within the village or close by villages, however when income sources disappear then the full family or income earners of the family migrate to distant places, the ultimate destination is usually the big cities.

Along with economic status, the effect of displacement is experienced differently by men, women and children be it from same economic class or from other. Women from poorer communities who end up in slums are more worried about the situation of housing, access to sanitation, sexual harassment, insecurity of their young children and lack of childcare in workplace. Men are more concerned about precarity of their job conditions, fear of eviction, drug problems etc. In the context of Bangladesh the experience of displacement also varies according to ethnicity. Climate stresses that contribute to displacement are different for the people of hill community of Chattogram compared to the people of the mainland. Similarly, their concern in urban setting is also different. Almost all the policies currently in operation, except the SODs, do not deal with displacement. The two policies that integrate rights of displaced are yet to be adopted.

Considerations for national governments:

- As this paper shows, displaced populations are not a homogenous group: they experience a host of different social, economic and environmental risks depending on their gender, ethnicity, place of residence and type of employment. Voices of all groups should be incorporated in policy-making.
- The current focus of climate adaptation programmes at the local level in rural areas should be expanded and a climate change adaptation fund should be allocated for the wellbeing of displaced populations based in cities.
- Trends in mega city development should be replaced by decentralisation of growth centres to others cities which have potential to enhance national growth by accommodating new migrants, be it displaced due to effect of climate change or otherwise.
- When reforming existing policies on climate change (for example in Bangladesh, the NAPA, BCCSAP and Delta plan 2100) the concerns of displaced populations should be integrated.
- In Bangladesh, the NSMDCIID and the draft National Urbanisation Policy 2014 should be adopted without further delay. All other national polices including the upcoming 8th Five Year Plan should include specific sections targeted to reduce vulnerability of climate induced displaced population.

Considerations for the regional actors:

Consistent with Objective 23b of the GCM, and drawing on related proposals from the Nansen Initiative, the Platform on Disaster Management and UNESCAP discussions, the ADFM puts forward the following considerations for discussion:

- Develop regional or bilateral arrangements, as appropriate, within existing regional frameworks, on cross-border disaster-displacement in order to agree upon practical mechanisms regarding admission, stay, and durable solutions, particularly in the context of sudden-onset disasters and emphasising the humanitarian nature of such arrangements.

- Integrate climate-related human mobility into relevant global and regional forums and processes, such as the Bali Process, the Colombo Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and in the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, etc.
- Regional and international actors can encourage states to:
 - initiate policy reforms that would accommodate rural-urban migration as one of many adaptation tools available.
 - implement SDG 11 at the national level to create inclusive, safe and sustainable cities through development of innovative partnerships while upholding national ownership and shared responsibility.
 - strengthen labour agreements and private sector partnerships that provide safe, regular migration pathways and counter human trafficking and other exploitative forms of migration, with attention to post-disaster and climate-vulnerable contexts.
- Strengthen the evidence base upon which to develop country-specific and regional responses, including through:
 - Enhance data collection and conduct further research to improve understanding on the relationship between climate change, disasters, and human mobility;
 - Create and build upon existing regional and international information-sharing mechanisms on disaster risk and weather forecasting among states to support early warning mechanisms;
 - Encourage exchange of information, dialogue and learning on relevant new scientific techniques and innovations, particularly related to agriculture, livelihoods, health and education;
 - Harmonise data collection methods and move towards integrated regional data collection systems.

Note on conceptual framework and terminologies used:

This paper uses the definition of the draft Bangladesh National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (NSMDCIID), which defines climate-induced internally displaced persons as “Persons, group of persons, households, or an entire community who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence temporarily or permanently or who have been evacuated as a result of disasters caused by sudden and slow-onset climatic events and processes, and have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”¹⁶ The IPCC defines vulnerability as “the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including variability and extremes”.¹⁷ This paper follows the UN definition that humanises vulnerability. It defines vulnerability as “the characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.”¹⁸ Hazards defined as a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity which may cause loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. This study includes both weather or climate related hazards such as changing precipitation or rainfall pattern, temperature rise, cyclones, drought, flooding and environmental hazards such as landslides, deforestation, riverbank erosion, etc. Adaptation is defined as adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.¹⁹ The definition includes both autonomous and planned adaptation actions.

¹⁶ Draft National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement in Bangladesh.

¹⁷ IPCC AR4, 2007.

¹⁸ “Terminology” the United Nations office of Disaster Risk Reduction

¹⁹ IPCC AR5, 2018.

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Proposal for an assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses, including analysis of progress of Bali Process initiatives since 2016 Bali Declaration

Purpose

This paper proposes that the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) recommend to the Bali Process Co-Chairs that the Bali Process request the ADFM prepare an assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses, including an analysis of the progress of Bali Process Initiatives since the 2016 Bali Declaration.

This assessment may be further informed by an Eminent Persons Group of former Ministerial Co-Chairs of the Bali Process.

Background

In March 2016, following the Andaman Sea crisis, the Bali Process at its Sixth Ministerial Meeting agreed to a suite of initiatives that would better enable it to have early warning of regional displacement and more timely and targeted responses.

Some overarching principles were outlined in the 2016 Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Declaration encouraged members to “provide safety and protection to migrants, victims of human trafficking, smuggled persons, asylum seekers and refugees, whilst addressing the needs of vulnerable groups including women and children and taking into account prevailing national laws and circumstances.”

The Declaration also recognised “the need to grant protection for those entitled to it consistent with relevant international legal instruments and in all cases, the principle of non-refoulement should be strictly respected.”

Specific initiatives were set out in the Co-Chairs Statement and further elaborated in decisions of the Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials Meetings.

The key actions were the establishment of the Consultation Mechanism, which would “authorise the Co-Chairs to consult, and if necessary, convene future meetings to discuss urgent irregular migration issues with affected and interested countries in response to current regional issues or future emergency situations”, and a review of the region’s responses to the Andaman Sea situation of 2015.

Ministerial decisions were further elaborated by decisions of senior officials following the Bali Process Review of the Region’s Response to Andaman Sea Situation of May 2015. Further actions included establishment of a Task Force on Planning and Preparedness, commitment to stronger Bali Process–ASEAN linkages in dealing with displacement and establishment of the Government and Business Forum.

These key initiatives have been operationalised in the period since 2016. The Bali Process engaged with significant irregular migration situations through the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism and Bali Process senior officials’ Co-Chairs’ Good Offices outreach. The Task Force on Planning and Preparedness has held four meetings and developed its capability. The Government and Business Forum has held two meetings to develop its priorities. Better connection has been made with ASEAN. Practical experience has now been gained in the working of all of these mechanisms by participating states and parties.

The Bali Process has continued to refine tactical issues for consideration, including incorporation of matters such as return and reintegration of migrants and supply chain transparency.

As major Bali Process initiatives were adopted and developed, external events in relation to forced and irregular migration deliver both major challenges and opportunities to the governance of migration globally and in the region, and to the nature of practical responses.

Forced migration populations globally are at record levels, with particular pressures experienced with the movement of populations from the Middle East and African countries as well as in Latin America. Within the South-Southeast Asia region, mass displacement from Myanmar to Bangladesh remains a critically unresolved issue. Other displacements, repatriation efforts, human trafficking and protection and welfare concerns and the effects of climate change, continue to require constant focus and attention.

Global efforts to reach new understandings in dealing with all forms of migration resulted in adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in December 2018. While it is too early to measure their impacts, it is imperative that States are encouraged to adopt policies and practices that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Compacts.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Bali Process and its membership over many years, the drivers of forced migration, people smuggling and human trafficking remain as strong as ever, as do the challenges of governments in dealing with the consequences. Failure to meet these challenges is likely to increase the probability of deteriorating inter-state relations, internal conflicts and violence, and misery for the most vulnerable 'at risk' peoples.

Assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses

The ADFM believes it is timely for there to be a strategic assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses in view of the major changes that have occurred in the global and regional environment since Bali Process Ministers and officials made their landmark decisions in 2016. Such an assessment would align well with the forthcoming 20th Anniversary of the Bali Process in 2022.

This assessment would look at changes to the global and regional environment and likely trends in the next five years and beyond. It would seek to identify the likely forced migration challenges in our region and suggest those areas which States and organisations might wish to regard as priorities for action. The assessment would take into account existing assessments of regional forced migration priorities, for instance, including those laid out in the GCR and GCM.

A part of the strategic assessment involves examining the achievements of the Bali Process mechanisms introduced in 2016 and how these could be built upon for future success. There may also be ways to improve the effectiveness of existing mechanisms or establish new ones.

The ADFM, in close partnership and consultation with other interested organisations, can carry out this strategic assessment in a similar manner to its input into the 2016 Bali Process review of the region's responses to the Andaman Sea situation. The ADFM is well-placed to assist the Bali Process with an informed, external and independent view. This strategic assessment would be further enhanced if it is informed by an Eminent Persons Group of former co-chairs, such as Pak Marty Natalegawa, Pak Hassan Wirajuda, Gareth Evans and Julie Bishop.

This assessment of future regional priorities by the ADFM would take into account, complement and inform development of the ongoing Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation and the Regional Support Office (RSO) Strategic Plan.

If ADFM participants are willing to agree to undertaking the assessment, it is proposed that the Bali Process Co-Chairs be approached to propose to Bali Process Ministers at their next ministerial meeting that the ADFM undertake this assessment in support of its strategic direction.

Process and timeline

If ADFM participants support undertaking the assessment, the process and timeline would be along the following lines:

- Formal endorsement of strategic assessment proposal at February ADFM 2020 meeting, further scoping of its purpose and focus, as well as initial consultation with ADFM members on future regional priorities
- Recommendation made to Bali Process Co-Chairs
- Selection of ADFM review team and Eminent Persons Group
- Methodology to include: desktop research, consultation with selected government officials, consultation with RSO, consultation with international organisation officials, consultation with ASEAN officials
- Formal commissioning of strategic assessment at October 2020 Bali Process Ministerial Meeting
- Strategic assessment completed by mid-year 2021
- Strategic assessment formally endorsed and implemented in 2021 ahead of the 20th Anniversary Bali Process Ministerial Meeting

Note: Timelines may need to be flexible to mesh with changing Bali Process timelines.

Proposal for consideration by ADFM members

It is recommended that the ADFM agrees to:

1. Undertake an assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses (including analysis of progress of Bali Process initiatives since 2016 Bali Declaration)
2. Recommend to Bali Process Co-Chairs to propose to Bali Process Ministers at their next ministerial meeting that the ADFM undertake this assessment in support of its strategic direction, and to select an Eminent Persons Group to advise on the assessment.