



# OCEAN HEALTH, CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION: UNDERSTANDING THE NEXUS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

SIDE EVENT – 05 JUNE 2017 13H15 TO 14H30

Conference Room A – United Nations Headquarters

## CONCEPT NOTE



(Carteret Islands. Copyright: Mohammed Muse)

**Hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Madagascar in New York**

**Lead Organizer: IOM Partner: WWF**

### **Background - Oceans and Migration: What is at stake?**

The Call for Action “Our Oceans, Our Future: Call for Action” that will result from the *United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*, is expected to highlight that oceans contribute to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies, including poverty eradication, food security, livelihoods, disaster reduction, climate change impact mitigation and adaptation, and decent work. **All these dimensions together are intrinsically linked to the migration of people – whether forced or voluntary – and can have direct and indirect impacts on the decision and/or the necessity to migrate.**

Climate change-related modifications that impact the global ocean have direct consequences on island and coastal populations; as the environment, economy and livelihoods of many of these communities worldwide are affected. Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes<sup>1</sup> that climate change is expected to increase the displacement of people in developing countries and the poorest communities, especially in coastal areas and low islands.

The increasing and cumulative impacts on ocean health, both from the direct use of ocean and coastal resources and indirectly from land-based pollution for example, put unprecedented pressure and stress on marine ecosystems and their ability to provide food and livelihoods, in particular for vulnerable communities and developing states. Around 3 billion people secure almost 20 per cent of their animal protein from fish. The demand for protein from the sea has increased dramatically as human populations have grown; yet coastal and marine life and biodiversity is highly threatened by a lack of adequate protection that ultimately menaces human communities that depend on coastal and oceanic resources. These negative impacts can influence the migration patterns of affected communities as well as the daily lives of communities receiving migrants.

The negative impacts of sea-level rise, such as coastal erosion, often exacerbated by poorly managed natural barriers such as mangroves and coral reefs, intensify in some cases extreme weather events such as severe storms and floods. These events regularly provoke the displacement of large numbers of people<sup>2</sup> and between 2008 and 2015, 21.5 million people on average have been newly displaced every year within their own countries due to weather-related hazards, principally floods and storms. In addition, sea level rise is expected to have long term impacts on migration. The majority of world metropolises are located on coasts – including in South Asia and South East Asia; whilst sea level rise poses an existential threat to some Small Island Developing States (SIDS) under the menace of complete disappearance. Over

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2014 Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Working Group II Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [C.B. Field, V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea and L.L. White, eds.]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2016/2016-global-report-internal-displacement-IDMC.pdf> p 25

40 million people living<sup>3</sup> in major cities are threatened by submersion; and this brings up the question of where these people will go if worst case scenario materialize.

### **Brief description of the event**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and WWF, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Madagascar, are organizing a side event to the United Nations Ocean Conference which will include a moderated panel debate to highlight the vital importance of considering migration issues within the ocean debate, and vice versa. A Q&A will follow the panel. The thematic focus of the side event is directly relevant to several partnership dialogues under the Ocean Conference: Partnership Dialogue 2 (managing protecting and conserving marine and coastal ecosystems), Partnership Dialogue 3 (ocean acidification), Partnership Dialogue 4 (making fisheries sustainable) and Partnership Dialogue 5 (increasing economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs).

### **Objectives**

The Ocean and Migration nexus is increasingly being considered within migration, fisheries/food security and climate change debates. The 2017 Ocean Conference represents a milestone to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and it is critical to bring the human dimensions related to ocean to the debate, including questions of migration. In that respect, the side event will represent the opportunity to introduce a large audience to some of the key issues around the ocean and migration nexus and to provide visibility to an essential theme that impacts millions of people.

### **Opening Remarks**

Mr. Ashraf El Nour, Director, IOM Office to the United Nations

**Moderator:** Ms. Rosiland Jordan, Al Jazeera

### **Panelists**

- Mr. Jean Edmond Randrianantenaina, Director General of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center, Madagascar
- Representative from Ecuador (TBC)
- Ms. Françoise Gail, Scientific Advisor, Ocean and Climate Platform
- Mr. John Tanzer, Leader WWF Global Ocean Practice
- Ms. Mariam Traore Chazalnoel, Thematic Specialist, Migration, Environment and Climate Change, IOM

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholls, R.J. et al. 2008 Ranking Port Cities with High Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Extremes: Exposure Estimates. OECD Environment Working Paper 1. OECD Publishing, Paris

## Discussion Questions

1. Understanding the issues at stake: What are the linkages between migration, climate, and declining ocean health including overexploitation of marine resources? What are the impacts at international, regional, national and local levels? What are the gaps in knowledge?
2. How to respond to these challenges: What are the current initiatives and best practices, drawn from different communities of practices that can inform action? How to finance action?
3. Enhancing partnerships and policy coherence: What are the entry points in global and regional policy dialogues to tackle ocean health and migration issues? What are the possible entry points at the national level? What partnerships are necessary to ensure coherent comprehensive responses?

## Additional Resources

IOM Infosheet on Oceans, Environment Climate Change and Human Mobility ([http://www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/MECC%20Infosheet%20Oceans\\_7Nov2016.pdf](http://www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/MECC%20Infosheet%20Oceans_7Nov2016.pdf) )

IOM Environmental Migration Portal – [www.environmentalmigration.iom.int](http://www.environmentalmigration.iom.int)

