

# Climate Action at UNHCR

Already on the frontlines of the  
#ClimateEmergency

Presentation to Portuguese Parliament  
Environment, Energy and Spatial Planning Affairs Committee

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Refugees and IDPs often located in the most fragile and climate vulnerable countries worldwide.

The effects of climate change, in combination with other factors, will increase the displacement of people (IPCC)

## **Climate change will:**

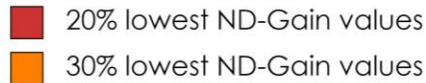
- Increase frequency & intensity of sudden-onset disasters (80%+)
- Increase slow-onset hazards
- Increase cascading disasters – inability to recover
- Increase competition over resources, food insecurity, water scarcity
- Disproportionately impact women, elderly, already displaced
- Hinder the potential for displaced persons to return



# Link b/w climate vulnerability and displacement

- Almost 90% of global refugees
- Almost 70 % of global IDPs

**ND-Gain: vulnerability & readiness to adapt**



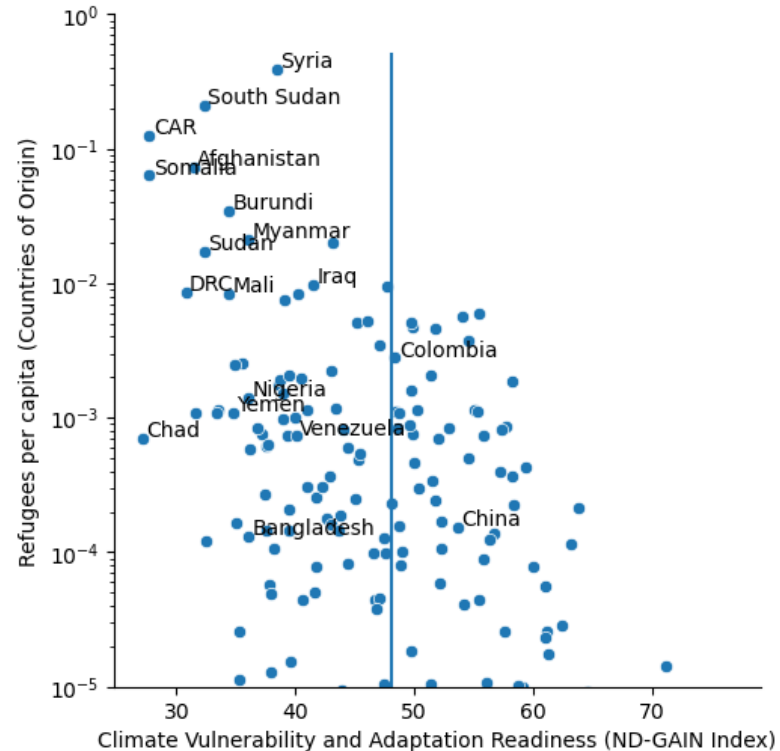
Source: UNHCR (2018), ND-GAIN index (2018)

# Climate vulnerability & adaptation readiness of refugee countries of origin (global)

States w/ highest number of refugees per capita tend to be more climate vulnerable and less ready to adapt to CC (e.g. Sudan)

Countries in the upper left may require specific support:

- to adapt to climate change
- to enhance capacity for durable solutions.



Source: UNHCR (2018), ND-GAIN index (2018), WB (2018) and IDMC<sub>5</sub>(2018)

- 8 of the 10 countries hit hardest by conflict are among the most exposed to climate hazards<sup>1</sup>
- The 8 worst food crises were linked to both climate shocks & conflict.

OCOA (2020), Global Humanitarian Overview 2020.



<sup>1</sup>Source: UCDP (1989 – 2019), ND-Gain exposure (time invariant), UNHCR (2019) and IDMC (2019).

*We are witnessing a changed reality in that forced displacement nowadays is not only vastly more widespread but is simply no longer a short-term and temporary phenomenon.*  
*High Commissioner Filippo Grandi*

Near doubling of  
'natural disasters' in  
past 20 years

Extreme weather  
displaced 25 million  
people in 140  
countries




People in low income  
countries 4X more  
likely to be displaced

Not on track for 2C.  
Need to look at worst  
case scenarios.

Sahel 4-6C+, 2X  
pop'n by 2050, -  
30/50% food/water  
insecurity.





		Approach			
		Collaborative	Evidence-based	Innovative	Inclusive
Three Pillars for Action	 <b>1. Law &amp; Policy</b>	<b>Objective 1:</b> Guide the interpretation and application of relevant legal and policy frameworks, develop guidance and catalyze international discussions			
	 <b>2. Operations</b>	<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Preserve and rehabilitate the natural environment and mitigate environmental degradation in displacement settings <b>Objective 2.2:</b> Enhance the resilience of displaced people and host communities to climate-related and other environmental risks <b>Objective 2.3:</b> Strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action and response to support protection and solutions for people displaced and their hosts in disaster situations			
	 <b>3. UNHCR's Environmental Footprint</b>	<b>Objective 3:</b> Improve UNHCR's environmental sustainability by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing negative impacts on the environment			





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# Relevant Law and Policy

- **1951 Refugee Convention:** where persecution risks result from/are increased in the context of disaster or CC effects
- **1969 OAU Convention:** where events seriously disturb public order
- **1984 Cartagena Declaration**
- **Complementary forms of protection:** where there is real risk of serious harm
- **Temporary protection** after sudden-onset disasters
- **Kampala Convention:** outlines responsibilities on the part of states with respect to IDPs including those displaced by natural or human made disasters associated with climate change
- The **Global Compact on Refugees** acknowledges displacement in context of disasters, CC, environment and calls for responsibility sharing, prevention and root causes, protection and assistance.

# Greening of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



2017



2019



# Reducing monsoon hazard risk in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



**Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP)**



# Predictive Analytics Project

## Anticipatory planning

Get ahead of the curve.

How can AI and ML enhance future UN operations?

Inter-connectedness of risks in Sahel?

How will climate change/mega-trends impact the triple nexus?

## Data sharing

Align with the SG's Data Strategy

Facilitate, access, integrate & share data

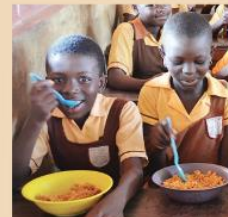
Regional Data/knowledge Hub

Non-traditional data: social media /crowdsourcing

Unified insights on SDG progress

Facilitate timely cross-pillar analysis/anticipatory planning

## Humanitarian



## Development



## Peace and Security



# Operationalization: Regional Plans of Action

- Led by Regional Bureaux in 2021 with support from HQ
- Engage in regional consultations and workshops
- Map regional actors, capacity, priority needs, climate risk profiles, etc.
- Maintain flexibility and cognisance of operational realities
- Adapt planning processes as part of our core approach ▪ instructions, procedures, guidance, tools for RBM, risk management
- Build on existing initiatives and systems, or act as a catalyst to create, if none exist
- Build on global commitments, including GCR/GRF, PDD and the UNFCCC TFD

# Thank you



13 April 2021