

PROPOSED TOPIC PAPER

Theme: Global Changes and Risk Management

Prepared by United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security
(UNU-EHS)

Theme	Global Changes and Risk Management
Topic	Migration, changing land uses, human settlements and water
Main Question	Is water a driver for human displacement?
Related sub-questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does water scarcity trigger large scale displacement and mass migration? If so, what type of water scarcity e.g. lack of safe drinking water, lack of water for agricultural purposes? 2. Do water hazards such as flooding cause permanent displacement of affected populations or only temporary displacement during the period of the hazard? 3. Do one-off water related events trigger migration or is it rather repeated, successive events eroding livelihoods which trigger migration decisions? 4. If water-related events trigger human displacement, what are the interacting social, economic and political factors that lead to this outcome? 5. What type of people are displaced by water events and what are the patterns of displacement (temporary/permanent, circular/seasonal or internal/international) which occur? 6. What are the different management and policy interventions required to deal with human displacement due to water?
<u>General introduction</u>	<p>Water—in all its dimensions—affects the ability of people to live and thrive in their environments across the globe. Indeed, water availability and water quality have shaped where people have settled and why people have moved across the millennia. Today, water availability and quality continues to be a contributing factor to migration, especially in areas where compounding factors of poverty and vulnerability to natural hazards are present. Migration pressures are predicted to mount further as the effects of climate change exacerbate and alter existing patterns of water availability and quality.¹</p> <p>It is in coastal areas, where 70% of the world's cities with over 5 million inhabitants are located, that is thought will face the largest migration pressures. Megacities cluster in these waterfront areas, attracting migrants to sprawling slums and simultaneously clogging waterways and exacerbating water demands. Although constituting only 2 % of the total land surface of the earth, these low-lying regions contain 10% of the current world population (noting that over 40% of the world's people live within 100km of the coast) and</p>

¹ UNU-EHS research on environment and migration is done as part of a European Commission 6th Framework Programme research consortium ("EACH-FOR", Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios). This research is carried out together with support from the International Organization for Migration.

	<p>13% of the urban population. In particular, people who occupy regions in the low elevation coastal zones between 1 and 10 meters above sea level of the world are becoming vulnerable to the potential for permanent inundation of their homes and livelihoods will face questions of relocation. Of significance is that about 75% of all the people residing in low-lying areas are in Asia, and the most vulnerable are the poor. Current projections of temperature and sea level rises and increased intensity of droughts and storms suggest that population displacement at significant scales will take place within the next 30-50 years.</p> <p>When discussing drivers of human movement that involve shocks—such as natural hazards like flooding—the question arises of whether people on the move are migrants, displacees, or refugees. How one defines the phenomena affects how it is measured and quantified and more importantly how policy responses are shaped to ease water-related problems and address human movements. To date there has been no agreed international definition of “environmental migration”.</p>
(Types of) Organizations to be involved in topic consultations	<p>Associations: Farmers/Water Users, migrant groups;</p> <p>International Agencies: IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNHCR, UNHABITAT, OCHA, UNISDR, UNICO, UNICEF, UNESCO. UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNU, OSS, ICARDA</p> <p>National Governments: Ministries of agriculture, interior and defence, rural development, water management, environmental affairs, economic development, social welfare, immigration, health and planning</p> <p>Research Institutions: UNU, Universities and government research institutions focusing on migration issues and/or water related topics</p> <p>Multilateral donors: World Bank, ADB,</p> <p>International Aid agencies: e.g. USAID, AusAID, SIDA,</p> <p>Environmental agencies / NGOs: e.g. Oxfam, CARE, IFRC, emergency relief NGOs, Save the Children</p> <p>Related national organisations, NGOs and Local civil society</p>
Process of paper and session development:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft 1 of topic scoping paper to be sent to key institutions for comments 2. Improved draft to be placed on website 3. Improved draft with comments received to be discussed at the February coordinators meeting to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agree on key questions b. Agree on the topic document so that it can be placed on the Forum web-site c. Agree on key stakeholders to take part in the development of the topic d. Agree on consultation process: relevant meetings with key stakeholders e. Agree on the process and actors to develop the forum session.