



# Migration in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)

Migration can play an important role in building adaptive capacity to climate change in low-income countries, for example by diversifying household income sources and leading to positive development impacts. However, there is relatively little research on how climate change adaptation policies account for migration. The Migration RPC's review of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) created by Least Developed Countries (LDCs) investigated the ways in which these policy documents discuss migration. The review found that NAPAs' discussion of migration issues varied widely: while a number of NAPAs saw migration as a key variable in their adaptation plans, other countries scarcely accounted for it. Furthermore, NAPAs that did consider migration in their proposed adaptation activities were often concerned with reducing autonomous migration flows, which risks compromising the potential benefits migration can bring to poor people, in particular.

## The migration and climate change debate

In recent years, a number of reports have suggested that climate change will result in new waves of human migration, as people leave areas affected by sea-level rise, flooding and drought. For example, the Stern Review suggested that 150-200 million people could be displaced by climate change by 2050. However, the relationship between migration and climate change is complex, and the available evidence shows that people make pragmatic, disaster-specific choices about where best to move in the face of environmental changes. These decisions are mediated by a range of 'intervening factors' that either facilitate or constrain migration, including ease of transport, access to social networks in destination areas and government policies that restrict or encourage migration. While there is some evidence to indicate that droughts, floods and environmental degradation are linked to migration in low-income countries, this often consists of short-distance, internal migration rather than overseas migration.

Of course, climate change impacts such as rising temperatures, sea-level rise and increased storm intensity

**Key Point 1: There is surprisingly little empirical evidence to suggest that overseas migration occurs as a direct result of environmental change.**

may produce unprecedented environmental catastrophes, leading to the emergence of new migratory trends. However, it is important that migration is not solely viewed as a negative consequence of climate change or a symptom of failed adaptation efforts. Indeed, internal migration in developing countries can enhance resilience to climate change, for example by diversifying household income in different areas or sectors. This suggests that migration can play an important role in autonomous climate change adaptation – and that policies which restrict migration flows in low-income countries may in fact make many people more vulnerable to climate change impacts.

## The NAPAs policy process

NAPAs provide Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with an opportunity to create national climate change adaptation strategies that are country-driven and identify priority projects to be implemented in the immediate future. LDCs face comparatively difficult challenges in adapting to

climate change, as by definition they have severe structural impediments to growth including low per capita income, low levels of human capital and relatively high economic vulnerability. NAPAs, which are funded through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, typically include discussion of the country's main climate change vulnerabilities and barriers to adaptation, as well as profiles for proposed adaptation projects. In terms of geographic concentration, of the 45 countries that had completed NAPAs as of November 2010, 29 were from Sub-Saharan Africa, seven were in Asia, five were Pacific Island Countries (PICs), three were in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region and one was in the Caribbean.

It remains to be seen how effective NAPAs will be, as many of these plans are still in the early stages of implementation and have not yet been evaluated. However, there have been some pointed critiques of the NAPAs process. The 2007/2008 Human Development Report criticised NAPAs' project-based approach as being too limited to address LDCs' adaptation challenges and claimed that in many cases NAPAs have been developed in isolation from national poverty reduction strategies, potentially leading to policy disharmony. Others have criticized the consultation process for NAPAs, claiming that it often excludes the marginal groups that NAPAs are supposed to assist. Critics also claim that NAPAs should use a livelihoods-based approach, rather than a sector-based approach, to evaluate national climate change threats.

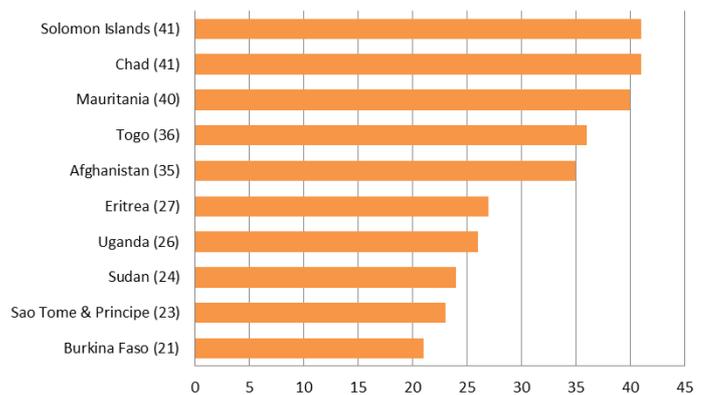
**Findings: discussion of migration in NAPAs**

The Migration RPC's review of NAPAs consisted of searching each country's policy document for key migration-related terms and conducting analysis in order to clarify the context in which these terms were discussed. The review found that the extent to which migration is discussed in NAPAs varies widely. Just 10 NAPAs had 20 or more references to the review's search terms (see Figure 1), while 14 NAPAs had 10 to 19 references for migration issues included in the review, and the remaining 21 NAPAs had fewer than 10 references to the review's migration-related search terms.

**Key Point 2: NAPAs are project-based adaptation plans created by Least Developed Countries. Twenty-nine of the 45 states that had submitted NAPAs by the end of 2010 were in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

To a certain extent, the level of migration discussion was linked to geographic location: Eight of the ten countries with 20 or more references to migration issues were from Africa, while six of the seven Asian LDCs had fewer than ten references to the search terms, a puzzling finding as this included major countries of migration such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Laos and Cambodia.

Figure 1. NAPAs with most references to migration issues



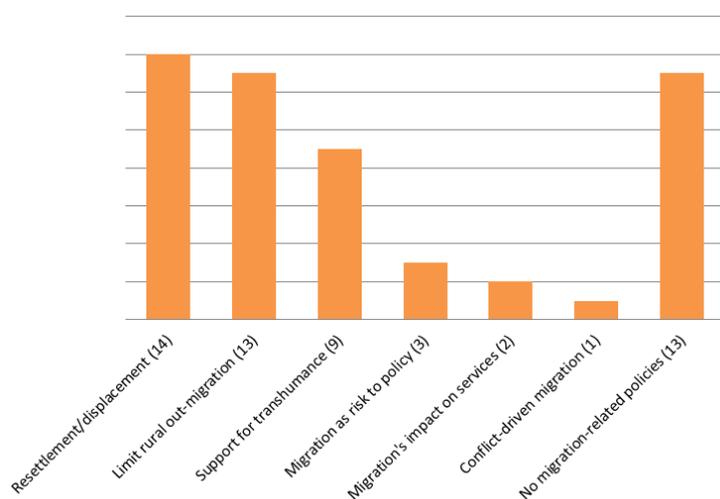
A number of migration-related themes are repeatedly discussed in NAPAs. Many countries mention that rural exodus and transhumance are common responses to climatic stress, particularly amongst states in West Africa and East Africa. Additionally, human displacement and resettlement were also mentioned in a number of NAPAs, including island states and coastal African countries. A number of NAPAs also discuss the negative impacts of climate-induced migration flows, such as conflicts over land in receiving areas and pressure on urban services. Some NAPAs reference migration that is already occurring in response to environmental change: for example, in the West African region, where 10 countries have produced NAPAs, many of these states' policy documents are preoccupied with existing migration in response to recent drought in the region, with population displacement due to sea-level rise and flooding being secondary considerations for many of these NAPAs.

## Migration and NAPAs' proposed adaptation projects

In general, the adaptation projects proposed in NAPAs that mention autonomous forms of migration are generally concerned with eliminating or reducing the need for these flows (see Figure 2). Overall, 13 countries had policies which aimed to limit rural out-migration and nine countries addressed issues related to transhumant migration - which for the most part were designed to limit the need for this type of migration. Fourteen countries had policies related to resettlement or displacement of populations, underlining the perceived importance of protecting vulnerable communities in NAPAs. Additionally, some NAPA policies highlighted the perceived negative aspects of migration, with two countries attempting to resolve migration issues related to the provision of health care or public services, three NAPAs viewing migration as a barrier to the implementation of their proposed adaptation projects, and one NAPA referring to conflict-driven migration. Significantly, 13 NAPAs did not mention migration in their proposed adaptation projects, illustrating the lack of attention to migration issues in many NAPAs.

Mali's NAPA is typical of the NAPAs that discuss migration that is already occurring in response to drought as it introduces a range of adaptation projects which are designed, in part, to stop migration flows. The NAPA's priority projects seek to halt further rural exodus in the country through the establishment of fish-farming practices in rural areas, by using

Figure 2. Migration in NAPAs' policies



**Key Point 3: Nearly one-third of NAPAs (13 of 45) do not mention migration or related issues in their adaptation projects.**

meteorological forecasts to assist in agricultural production and by extending micro-credit programmes to women and youth who remain in rural areas after other family members have migrated. Nearly identical policy approaches are also included in other African NAPAs, including those for Mauritania, Sudan, Djibouti, Rwanda and Uganda — all of which seek in various ways to arrest rural exodus in their priority projects by investing in rural areas.

### New policy directions: accounting for migration in national adaptation policies

The Migration RPC's review of NAPAs suggests key lessons for policy, which can help to better account for migration issues in national adaptation strategies and ensure synergy between these plans and national poverty reduction strategies:

1. While adaptation policies in rural areas are needed, such policies cannot be expected to stop migration. In general, attempts to halt rural-urban flows by investing in rural areas have failed in all but the short-term, and such policies risk creating barriers to people leaving fragile ecological zones, potentially resulting in increased vulnerability to climate change impacts.
2. Related to this, adaptation strategies require a focus on urban planning that accounts for on-going rural-urban migration and future environmental change. In many LDCs, rural-urban migration is expected to continue in the coming decades, and policies are needed that ensure migrant welfare and rights. This overlaps with practical concerns about providing essential infrastructure (including water, wastewater and drainage) in expanding cities in the context of more frequent environmental hazards and possible land loss.
3. Adaptation policies must account for the positive impacts of migration on adaptive capacity and resiliency, as well as its negative impacts. For example, projects could seek to utilise remittances or the diaspora to support adaptation in sending areas, while autonomous migration itself can form part of household adaptive strategies.

## Key Readings

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*The findings of the Migrating out of Poverty's review of NAPAs are discussed in greater detail in:*

Sward, J. and Codjoe, S., 2012. 'Human Mobility and Climate Change Adaptation Policy: A Review of Migration in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).' Migration RPC Working Paper. Brighton: Migrating out of Poverty RPC, University of Sussex.

NAPAs can be accessed via the UNFCCC's LDC portal: <[http://unfccc.int/cooperation\\_support/least\\_developed\\_countries\\_portal/submitted\\_napas/items/4585.php](http://unfccc.int/cooperation_support/least_developed_countries_portal/submitted_napas/items/4585.php)>

### Other key publications:

Black, R., Kniveton, D. and Schmidt-Verkerk, K., 2011. 'Migration and climate change: towards an integrated assessment of sensitivity'. *Environment and Planning A* 43: pp. 431-450.

Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change, 2011. *Final Project Report*. London: The Government Office for Science.

Huq, S. and Khan, M.R., 2006. 'Equity in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs): The case of Bangladesh.' In: Adger, W. N., J. Paavola, S. Hug and M.J. Mace (eds.) *Fairness in Climate Change Adaptation*. London and Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press: pp. 181-200.

Satterthwaite, D., 2011. 'How urban societies can adapt to resource shortage and climate change.' *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 369: 1762-1783.

Piguet, É., Pécoud, A. and De Guchteneire, P. (eds.), 2011. *Migration and Climate Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tacoli, C., 2011. 'Not only climate change: mobility, vulnerability and socio-economic transformations in environmentally fragile areas of Bolivia, Senegal and Tanzania.' IIED Human Settlements Working Paper Series, Rural-Urban Interactions and Livelihood Strategies - No. 28. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.



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The Migrating out of Poverty RPC aims to promote policy approaches that will help to maximise the potential benefits of migration for poor people, whilst minimising its risks and costs. Following on from the Migration DRC which was established in 2003, Migrating out of Poverty is undertaking a programme of research, capacity-building, training and promotion of dialogue to provide the strong evidential and conceptual bases needed for such policy approaches. Migrating out of Poverty is funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development, although the views expressed in this policy briefing do not express DFID's official policy.

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