



---

## Climate Migration: The Human Costs of a Changing Planet

### Article

Climate migration is an issue that is becoming increasingly pressing as we continue to see the effects of climate change. People are being forced to leave their homes to look for a place where they can still live with the changing weather conditions. This adds to the number of people who are already migrating to the world's cities, and it has doubled globally in the past decade. This means that humanity needs to undertake a migration at a scale that has never been seen before, requiring the creation of new cities and massive population movements.

This issue will affect even wealthy nations as the world faces unprecedented climate change and demographic change. The UN has estimated that as many as one billion environmental migrants could occur over the next 30 years. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves: what does a sustainable world look like and what steps will we need to take to achieve it?

We will need to develop new ways of feeding, fueling, and maintaining our lifestyles in a manner that reduces atmospheric carbon levels. We will need to live in denser concentrations in fewer cities while also reducing the risks of crowded populations. This transition, if managed wisely and fairly, could lead to a new global commonwealth while migration can mitigate the crisis we are experiencing.

However, there are many challenges that must be addressed to achieve this goal. For instance, the potential to adapt to climate change is limited, and vulnerability hotspots cluster in regions that are particularly vulnerable. New health threats are emerging that are directly related to climate change, and private sustainable finance is failing to deliver the types of meaningful changes needed. Sustainable land use will be essential to meeting climate targets, and inclusive decision-making will be vital for effective climate action.

Currently, the legal definition of a refugee does not include those people who are forced to leave their homes because of climate change. While the UN Human Rights Committee has ruled that climate refugees cannot be returned to their homes, their rulings are not binding. Climate change is already displacing more people than political persecution, and the distinction between refugees and economic migrants is becoming more and more blurred. Instead of adapting to mass migrations, wealthy countries are militarizing their borders and erecting a "climate wall."

It is clear that the manner in which we manage human movement will either create a catastrophe or be our salvation. We will require a global climate migration pact, but in the interim, regional free movement agreements could be of assistance. Although some individuals have criticized the use of the terms "climate refugee" and "climate migrant" for obscuring the underlying historical conditions of migration, it is critical to recognize the true human costs associated with a changing



planet. We must tear down structural barriers and unsustainable lock-ins and work together to create a sustainable world that is suitable for everyone.

## Agenda

### Climate migration

- The movement of people due to the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels or extreme weather patterns
- *"Many people in coastal areas are being forced to migrate due to climate change-induced flooding."*

### Sustainable

- Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level for an extended period of time without depleting natural resources or causing harm to the environment or society
- *"We need to find sustainable solutions to feeding the growing population without degrading our natural resources."*

### Emissions



- The release of gases, such as carbon dioxide, into the environment, typically as a result of burning fossil fuels
- *"The government has implemented policies to reduce carbon emissions to combat climate change."*

### Vulnerability hotspots

- Regions that are particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change, such as flooding or drought
- *"The Sahel region in Africa is considered a vulnerability hotspot due to its susceptibility to drought and desertification."*

### Inclusive decision-making

- The process of involving all stakeholders in decision-making, with a focus on ensuring that everyone's views and needs are taken into consideration
- *"Inclusive decision-making is important in addressing climate change as it affects everyone in society."*



## Sustainability finance

- The practice of investing in businesses and projects that promote environmental sustainability and social well-being
- *"We need more sustainable finance to accelerate the transition towards a low-carbon economy."*

## Structural barriers

- Obstacles that prevent marginalized groups from participating fully in society, such as discrimination or unequal access to resources
- *"Structural barriers such as racism and sexism hinder progress towards a more sustainable world."*

## Migration pact

- An agreement between countries that outlines policies and regulations related to migration
- *"A global climate migration pact could help to protect the rights of climate migrants and ensure that they are not left behind."*

## Militarizing borders

- The process of increasing military presence and enforcement at national borders
- *"Many countries are militarizing their borders in an attempt to control migration, which can have negative implications for human rights."*

## Lock-ins

- Situations where current systems and infrastructure prevent change towards more sustainable alternatives
- *"The fossil fuel industry has created a lock-in where it is difficult to transition to renewable energy sources."*

## Discussion

1. To what extent can we predict the scale and direction of climate migration and what challenges do these predictions face? How can we better prepare and plan for the inevitable mass migration in a manner that is sustainable and equitable?

# IGM Session

2023-06-11T08:42:48.000Z

Category: Politics & Global Affairs | Tag(s): Climate Crisis, Environment

aimspace.



---

2. As climate refugees are not currently legally recognized as refugees, what policy measures could countries implement to mitigate the impact of climate migration on the world's most vulnerable populations? What ethical and practical considerations would come into play in developing such policies?

3. What opportunities does climate migration present for transforming urban design, transportation infrastructure, and green technologies to create more sustainable and equitable cities? How can we harness our collective creativity and innovation to ensure that the transition to a sustainable world generates a new global commonwealth?

aimspace.