

# PACIFIC RESEARCH PROJECT

PROMOTING HUMAN  
SECURITY AND MINIMIZING  
CONFLICT ASSOCIATED WITH  
FORCED MIGRATION IN THE  
PACIFIC REGION

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

United Nations University Institute  
on Globalization, Culture and Mobility

United Nations University Institute  
for Environment and Human Security

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## POLICY BRIEF

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PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-GCM**

Institute on Globalization,  
Culture and Mobility



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and Human Security



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need to know the  
focus on identity in  
community development  
Strengthen cultural  
prepare people with  
workshops providing  
utilizing appropriate  
- educating migrants on  
- Conform to the accept  
- Adopt new country

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This report highlights the main findings of a joint research project between the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the United Nations University (UNU) Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility and the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security.

Responding to the Forum Regional Security Committee's request to undertake research and develop policy recommendations on the security implications of poorly managed climate change induced migration, the research aimed to understand both the main human security challenges that climate induced migrants face when settling in receiving countries or communities and the major reasons for tensions or conflict. In addition, the research aimed to formulate policy recommendations that could help Forum Island Countries and other stakeholders from the Pacific to develop appropriate policy responses to promote human security and prevent conflict due to climate induced displacement and migration.

In this regard, this report formulates seven policy recommendations in order to promote human security and minimize conflict associated with forced migration in the Pacific region.

unity / Income  
→ Internal - business  
external - German  
create jobs  
better teachers  
better communication (with  
services  
action to climate change  
against strong winds  
against sea-level rise

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A) Develop legal and political frameworks to deal with migration issues both domestically and regionally.

B) Initiate, develop and strengthen interstate relations at diplomatic level through both bilateral and multilateral agreements with other Pacific Islands for a better governmental cooperation at all levels and, in particular, with regard to migration policies.

C) Recognize and address consequences of climate induced migration as a permanent issue in the region with immediate and long term impacts.

D) Promote intercultural dialogue and educate towards intercultural values and respect for diversity, emphasizing the positive aspect of migration as 'way of life', thus reaffirming the 2008 Niue Declaration on Climate Change. People of the Pacific expressed their strong desire to keep their social and cultural identities and live in their own countries into the future, *where possible*<sup>1</sup>.

E) Assess migration at regional level and monitor progress by developing national databases.

F) Address and find solutions to migration in line with the human rights standards, including the responsibility for avoiding protracted displacement, forced returns that put at risk the lives and health of women, children and men, potential conflict between the migrants and host communities and within migrants communities, inadequate housing and insecurity of tenure, and a lack of access to livelihood opportunities and basic services, such as health and education<sup>2</sup>.

G) Focus on continuing research on conflict and migration in the Pacific for further recommendations in the face of Forum Leaders decision-making and subsequent international and national policy discussions on conflict and migration.

1. The Nansen Initiative consultation on the Pacific: <http://www.nanseninitiative.org/pacific-regional-consultation>

2. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for the Pacific, "Protecting the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in Natural Disasters, Challenges in Pacific" [http://pacific.ohchr.org/docs/IDP\\_report.pdf](http://pacific.ohchr.org/docs/IDP_report.pdf)



on or cultural exchange  
before they migrate  
of human beings, human rights  
cultural values)  
other countries to educate  
norms, values of that countries  
mass programs, TV, Radio)  
receiving countries on po  
s migrants (eg housing, safe  
ent opportunities)  
nt to strengthen their links  
ches to improve and maintain  
ues/character of migrants  
with receiving countries to  
community/organisation for

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GIS

Geographic Information Systems

IDPs

Internally displaced persons

IDMC

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IOM

International Organization for Migration

IPCC

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

OCHA

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PIFS

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

PNG

Papua New Guinea

SLR

Sea level rise

SIS

Small Islands States

UNFCCC

The United Nations Framework Convention  
on Climate Change

UNU-GCM

The United Nations University Institute  
on Globalization, Culture and Mobility

UNU-EHS

The United Nations University Institute  
for Environment and Human Security

a) Provide more project  
b) Increase Salary & go  
c) Develop talents of  
d) Awareness  
e) provide loan sch  
  
2) Policy  
  
3) Policies revisi

## INTRODUCTION

**P**olitical, socio-economic issues and climate change are the main contributing factors for which growing numbers of people worldwide are migrating. The Pacific region is anticipating vast increases in climate induced migration in the near future and may already be experiencing the consequences of sudden flows of climate-induced migration<sup>1</sup>. In addition to sea level rise (SLR), other major threats, including ocean acidification, king tides, and increased intensity of hurricanes and cyclones, are worsening both agriculture and infrastructures, entailing a variety of problems for people living in the Pacific Islands.

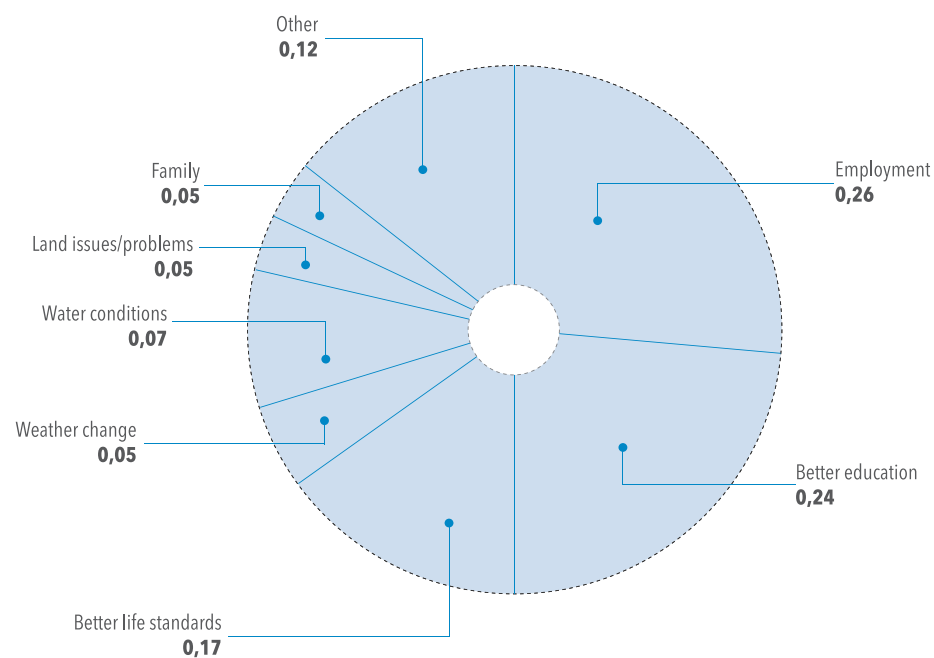
Evidence indicates that people in the Pacific migrate for a number of reasons, not just climate change. For example, data collected from 42 interviews carried out with representatives from both communities and governments in the region suggest that the reasons for choosing to migrate were not direct consequences of climate change but rather a general worsening of living standards, including poor school systems and unemployment, which together represents 67% of the main issues that interviewees identified as reasons for leaving (see graph 1).

Furthermore, the findings illustrate that where climate change is a source of migration, it is not climate change alone, but the unaddressed consequences of both climate change and natural disasters, including the deterioration of lands, water and infrastructures, along with new economic and social challenges that force people to migrate. These direct and indirect consequences of climate change represent 17% of the reasons for which people migrate according to the experiences of those interviewed.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/2014/08/pacific-islanders-climate-change-worsening-host-woes/>

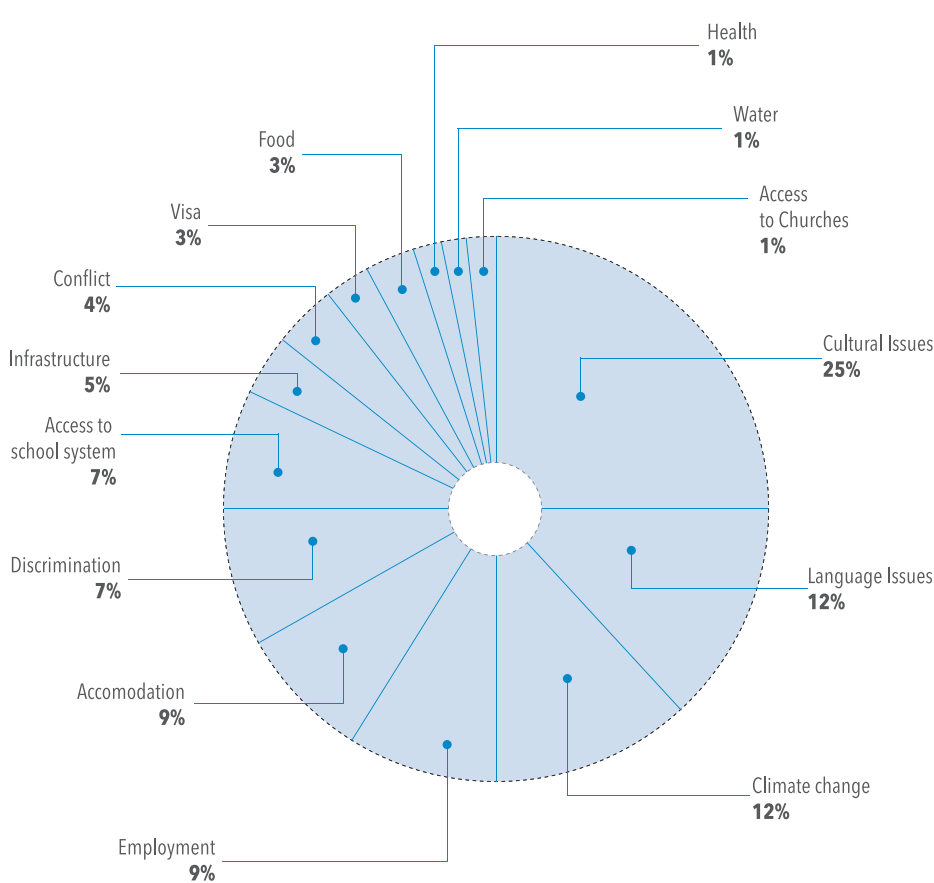


GRAPH 1:  
MAIN REASONS FOR MIGRATING



The main challenges that people who migrate or are forced to migrate experience in the selected case studies in the Pacific area (see graph 2).

GRAPH 2:  
MAIN CHALLENGES MIGRANTS FACE WHEN ARRIVING IN NEW COMMUNITIES



Other challenges that migrants face in the new destinations are language issues and new climate change challenges. Employment, accommodation, discrimination and access to schools are also common problems that can intensify the feeling of personal and collective vulnerabilities that subsequently exacerbate relations with local communities.

In summary, it appears that once people move they face many different threats, including socio-economic (the need to find a job and a place where to live, good standards of living) and cultural vulnerabilities (cultural loss, identity issues, language difficulties). In this light, the human security implications of migration are a fact in the region that can no longer be underestimated and remain unaddressed. However, despite political recognition of the implications of climate induced migration at the regional level in the Pacific, most of countries in the region lack migration policies. There appears to be neither regional nor domestic legal and political frameworks from which Pacific Islanders can benefit, whether they migrate internally or to another country, or whether migration is driven by the search for better standards of living or as a consequence of climate change and natural disasters.

It is in light of these and other findings from the research project, that the following recommendations are provided, with the aim of strengthening national and regional policy to promote human security and minimize conflict associated with forced migration in the Pacific region.

# RECOMMENDATION 1

## DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS TO DEAL WITH MIGRATION ISSUES

Conflicts, socio-economic inequalities, natural disasters and climate change are predicted to displace growing numbers of people worldwide and, particularly, in the Pacific, which will be one of the most affected regions in the world. In addition to sea level rise (SLR), other major threats, including ocean acidification, king tides, and increased intensity of hurricanes and cyclones, are worsening both agriculture and infrastructure, entailing a variety of problems for those people living in the Pacific Islands. Indirectly, forced displacement and migration as a result of climate change is raising questions about land ownership, sovereignty, nationality, tradition and colonialism.

Though this phenomenon is well known, most countries in the region do not have migration policies. Forced migration and displacement is recognized at the regional level in the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development (SRDP). Goal 1 of the SRDP directs national governments to consider integrating "human mobility aspects into climate change adaptation and disaster risk management plans and strategies, including strengthening the capacity of governments and administrations to protect individuals and communities that are vulnerable to climate change displacement and migration, through targeted national policies and actions, including labour migration policies"<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the SRDP suggests that Regional Organizations "strengthen research-based understanding of the underlying drivers and determinants of climate and disaster risk, and of the consequences and risk management options, including climate change induced migration"<sup>2</sup>.

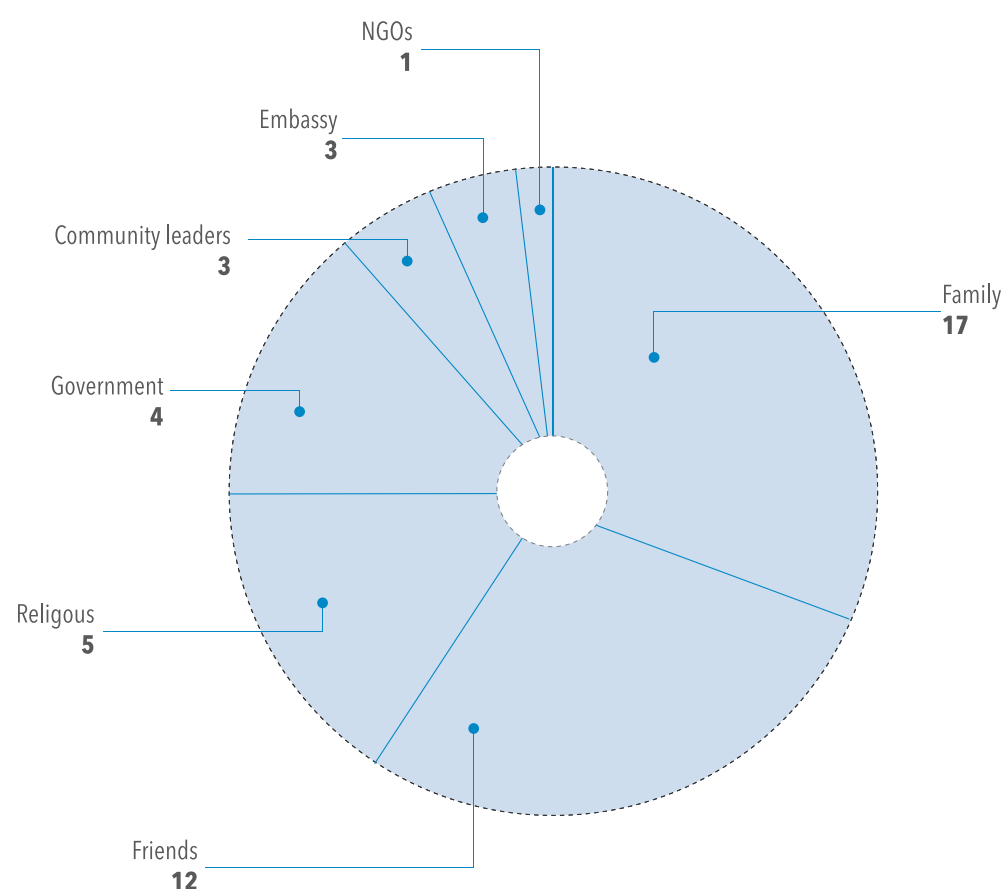
Some specific examples selected among the case studies developed exemplify why and how migration policies could assist the integration of migrants in new places. As the findings shown in graph 3 illustrate, migrants have found assistance mostly in social and family networks, and only in a few cases in community leaders, governmental or other official frameworks of reference.

1. *Draft Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP)*, p. 40.

2. *Ibid*, p. 41.



GRAPH 3:  
WHO HAS ASSISTED MIGRANTS IN RECEIVING COUNTRIES



The existence of legal and political frameworks would help migrants integrate more successfully. It is clear from previous studies<sup>3</sup> that the better integration of migrants is related to a decrease in tensions and conflicts with local communities. When better integration policies are in place, local communities also show less discrimination towards migrants<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, it is highly recommendable that countries that wish to avoid tensions and conflict arising between locals and migrants' communities should make robust efforts to help them integrate in the receiving societies successfully.

Some of the case studies from Papua New Guinea carried out in the first half of 2015 as part of this research project, also show the need for migration policies in order to support community initiatives, address cultural losses, and reduce the risk of violent conflict. From these cases it is clear that there is a lack of international and regional and national strategies to deal with conflicts that emerge as a consequence of forced migration. In addition to integration policies, recent studies of international and intercommunity conflicts<sup>5</sup> have highlighted that partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors have proven to be as successful and innovative in such contexts. Therefore a clear recommendation is to develop this type of partnership to deal with local consequences of forced migration in the region to ensure that human security is granted.

3. Bello, V. (2014) "Virtual belongings, dual identities and cultural discomforts: The role of Mediaspaces and Technospaces in the integration of migrants". *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture*, Vol. 5 Issue 2-3: 213-230.

4. Bello, V. (2015) "Inclusiveness as Construction of Open Identity. How social relationships affect attitudes towards immigrants in European Societies." *Social Indicators Research*.

5. Bello, v. (2015) "One Concept for Different Roles? Private vs Collective Interests in Non-State Actors' Governance of Violence and Crime". *International Studies Review*.

## CARTERET ISLANDERS TO BOUGAINVILLE

Due to sea-level rise and land erosion, the Carteret Islands in Papua New Guinea became uninhabitable. The Carteret Islands is a group of small island atolls that lie at only 1 meter above sea-level. The Carteret Islanders received little assistance for their relocation to Bougainville, despite the large media coverage about 'the first climate refugees'.<sup>6</sup>

This relocation is a good example of when people move to an already populated area and attempt to peacefully integrate into the existing community. In this case, the area of Bougainville is still recovering from a civil war that took place in the 1990s. The feelings of the people in the receiving community are reported to be "mixed".<sup>7</sup> Substance abuse and violence are reportedly persistent problems within the community of Bougainville (as a result of war).<sup>8</sup>

Faced with limited government support, the community-based initiative Tulele Piesa became active in finding ways to ease the situation between locals and forced migrants. Tulele Piesa is a group of elders who came together and mobilized public and private resources for resettlement. Various terms for resettlement have been laid out and intermarriage between Carteret islanders and Bougainvillians has been promoted as a means of social cohesion.<sup>9</sup>

This relocation has been regarded as an example of a locally initiated process with only minimal international intervention.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, as the people of the Carteret Islands continue to leave their island, many are calling on the governments to provide funds to support their integration.

In addition to funding support, a partnership between governmental levels and non-governmental entities, such as communities, would have probably found better solutions, such as: the development of integration policies which could help migrants to participate more successfully in the life of the host society and local communities; intercultural exchange programmes and education programmes towards the creation of intercultural values and respect for diversities, as highlighted in many occasions and also very recently by the UN Security Council when discussing International and Human Security<sup>11</sup>.

6. Several film makers have labeled the Carteret Islanders as the first climate refugees

7. <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/2011-02-26/video-carteret-climate-refugees-plight-oscar-spotlight>

8. [http://mediathatmattersfest.org/films/the\\_next\\_wave](http://mediathatmattersfest.org/films/the_next_wave)

9. <http://displacementsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/BG.pdf>

10. Find more information on the international support to the peace process here: [http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/19\\_Powers%20of%20persuasion\\_2008\\_ENG\\_F.pdf](http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/19_Powers%20of%20persuasion_2008_ENG_F.pdf)

11. 7361st Meeting of the Security Council (19 January 2015) "Inclusive Development Critical for Preventing Conflict, Speakers Emphasize, as Security Council Debates Maintenance of International Peace, Security". <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11740.doc.htm>





## TAKUU/MORTLOCK (SEA-LEVEL RISE)

Other neighboring islands to the Carteret islands insist on being included in relocation efforts. In 2009, Mortlock, Nuguria, and Tasman asked the Autonomous Bougainville Government (AGB) to consider their islands in relocation plans.<sup>12</sup> The international Organization for Migration is currently assessing the situation in the AGB and determining the levels of vulnerability to climate change and the need for people to relocate, temporarily or permanently.<sup>13,14</sup> Permanent relocation plans identified in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) “consider the forced displacement of the 2,000 inhabitants of the Tulun (Carteret) and 400 of the Takuu (Mortlock) islands in Papua New Guinea.”<sup>15</sup>

The government of PNG is making plans to relocate people to the mainland (specifically to Bougainville), though implementation is moving slowly. Such relocation is particularly difficult for the older generation of people living on Takuu. To them, their island is a treasure that has been preserved by ancestors and the preservation of traditions is of utmost importance. One resident states that, “relocation must be a last resort and not just considered because it is an easy and quick solution. If we leave our identity will be eroded and perhaps even lost forever!”<sup>16</sup>

12. <http://www.missionandjustice.org/mortlock-nuguria-tasman-ask-abg-to-be-included-in-relocation/>

13. <http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/IOM-DRR-Thematic-Brief-02.pdf>, 2007

14. <http://environmentalmigration.iom.int/es/node/454>

15. Sam Fankhauser, Simon Dietz and Phillip Gradwell, (2014) “Loss and Damage Non-economic losses in the context of the UNFCCC work programme on loss and damage”. February 2014 Policy Paper, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment: Table 2 p. 26. Online available at < <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Fankhauser-Dietz-Gradwell-Loss-Damage-final.pdf> > (last retrieved 26th May 2015).

16. [http://asopa.typepad.com/asopa\\_people/2012/06/takuu-my-atoll-my-home-place-of-my-ancestors.html](http://asopa.typepad.com/asopa_people/2012/06/takuu-my-atoll-my-home-place-of-my-ancestors.html)

## MANAM ISLANDS (VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS)

Although the 2004 volcanic eruptions on Manam Island that displaced approximately 14,000 people are not climate change related, they make a strong case in demonstrating how an uncontrolled and sudden change to an inhabited island environment can result in forced migration. Since November 2004, approximately 14,000 islanders have been living in three care centers in Bogia, on the mainland. Their presence has angered local villagers; they are no longer welcome because the landowners in Bogia do not want refugees on their land. There have been extreme cases of violence,<sup>17</sup> including several murders (beheadings, stabbings, etc.) and rapes.

Many blame the government for not having consulted properly with the Bogia land owners, who believe these migrants have illegally occupied their lands. As of January 2015, the government has allocated 77,000 hectares to relocate the Manam islanders<sup>18</sup>, though the lack of legal foundation has been mentioned as an obstacle.<sup>19</sup>

There is an urgent need for both regional and domestic policies dealing with diverse migration issues, from relocations, to the integration of migrants in host societies. In the light of many UN Security Council decisions and meetings<sup>20</sup> around the issue of International and Human Security, sound strategies to develop partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental actors in particular need to be established. Moreover, there is a need for the development of policies that are sensitive to the needs of elders, women and children and other vulnerable residents who are concerned about the loss of culture and identity. In order to reduce violence and conflict that results from displacement, migration policies need to ensure the support of the most vulnerable.

17. <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/articles/tragedy-pngs-manam-islanders-refugees-their-own-country>

18. <http://www.pngloop.com/2015/01/19/govt-77000-hectares-relocate-manam-islanders/>

19. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/blog/2014/4-steps-the-papua-new-guinea-government-should-take-to-end-the-displacement-of-the-manam-idps->

20. See for all the press release for one of the most recent meeting of the UN Security Council on these issues. 7361st Meeting of the Security Council (19 January 2015) “Inclusive Development Critical for Preventing Conflict, Speakers Emphasize, as Security Council Debates Maintenance of International Peace, Security” <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11740.doc.htm>



## RECOMMENDATION 2

### INTERSTATE RELATIONS

The Pacific Island States share both challenges and responsibilities in relation to climate change. For this reason, States should collaborate and develop joint solutions, wherever possible, to protect their people and, above all, ensure the Human Security of everyone in the area. Cooperation at the governmental level is indispensable to develop strong migration and conflict prevention policies. Countries can share experience and expertise and assist each other when facing these common threats. The aforementioned lack of migration policies needs to be addressed and it is highly recommendable to establish a regional framework for this. A key supporting component for migration policies is developing and strengthening bilateral relations and multilateral relations between Pacific States.

There is an evident need to develop relations between states that foster the ways in which Pacific Island countries understand migration and human security. New frameworks need to be established to address current and upcoming Human Security implications stemming from forced migration. It is crucial that agreements are formed that have the commitment and recognition of all Pacific Islands states.

#### FIJI AND KIRIBATI - THE SALE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO THE KIRIBATI GOVERNMENT

There are recent wide-spread speculations that the Kiribati government has purchased agricultural land in Fiji for the future purpose of relocating its people there in the future. Though neither State has acknowledged such negotiations or plans, many are concerned about the impacts of this potential relocation on the local communities currently living on the purchased land. For example, the opposition party of the Fiji Government has raised questions in parliament as to the future of the land that has been purchased. There are concerns about the land titles and what future relocation might mean for the villagers of Naiqaqu and Valeni who are current customary owners of the land and what policies should be in place to deal with the repercussions of mass migration, i.e. infrastructure, employment and health care. Fiji's Land Minister, Mereseini Vuniqaqa, insists that the land in question belongs to the trustees of the Church of England, and that if relocation occurs in the future, the government can deal with these questions when it happens.<sup>21</sup>

In order to facilitate transparent negotiation regarding future relocation plans, governments must be willing to communicate openly with each other and their respective citizens. Multilateral or bilateral agreements and frameworks could help ease this process and provide a platform for open discussions and decision-making. Moreover, in order to understand the risks and opportunities that climate change presents, countries need to work together to find a common understanding. Only then may regional and bilateral policies and agreements develop and support the needs of those most affected.

21. <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=298789>

## RECOMMENDATION 3

### RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE INDUCED MIGRATION AS A PERMANENT ISSUE IN THE REGION WITH IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM IMPACTS.

Researchers are investigating the relation between climate change and migration to urban centers. It is predicted that climate change is one factor influencing rapid migration to South American cities, putting strain on governments to provide social protection to all citizens.<sup>22</sup> The Nansen Initiative is drafting a Protection Agenda with the goal to build consensus among States regarding the protection of people displaced across borders because of disasters and climate change.<sup>23</sup>

Over 27,000 people were forced from their homes in Fiji by two flood disasters and the impact of Cyclone Evan in 2012. The same cyclone also displaced people in Samoa, where another 3,700 people were forced from their homes by floods.<sup>24</sup> Moreover recently, devastating and deadly disasters such as Cyclone Pam and Typhoon Maysak have called attention to the role that climate change is playing in 'super storms'.<sup>25</sup> While it is difficult to establish a core link between the two, science is revealing that "climate change has magnified the risks and increased the cost of tropical disturbances around the world."<sup>26</sup>

#### THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In addition to deforestation<sup>27</sup> and tsunamis<sup>28</sup>, sea level rise is a major environmental stressor in the Solomon Islands. Sea level rise has already "decreased the amount of arable and habitable land on the islands of Malaita and Guadalcanal by 20+ centimeters" and by 2100 the SLR could be as high as 70 centimeters.<sup>29</sup> Much of the Malaita and Guadalcanal coasts are below two feet of elevation, if not below sea level, and many islands are coral atolls and are likely to disappear within the century. This will also promote coastal erosion and saltwater intrusions further decreasing arable and habitable land.<sup>30</sup>

22. <http://climatemigration.org.uk/research-roundup-climate-change-vulnerability-in-cities-and-the-agricultural-sector/>

23. The process will be consultative and build upon prior knowledge and research. Source: <http://www2.nanseninitiative.org/global-consultations/>

24. Loss and Damage Non-economic losses in the context of the UNFCCC work programme on loss and damage Sam Fankhauser, Simon Dietz and Phillip Gradwell, page 26

25. <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2015/04/22/island-nations-on-the-climate-change-frontlines-need-new-support>

26. <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2015/04/22/island-nations-on-the-climate-change-frontlines-need-new-support>

27. Massive exploitation of the land for logging is far beyond the estimated amount allowed to sustain the rain forests in the Solomon Islands and is "causing soil erosion polluting water supplies and decreasing nutrient rich soils for agriculture." Source: <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/solomon-sealevel.htm>

28. Tsunamis are a regular occurrence for the Solomon Islands as they rest on the ring of fire. Earthquakes between 7-8 magnitudes are common. The most recent tsunami caused by a 9.1 magnitude earthquake occurred in 2007, killing 52 people and leaving thousands homeless. Source: [http://pacific.ohchr.org/docs/IDP\\_report.pdf](http://pacific.ohchr.org/docs/IDP_report.pdf), page 8

29. <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/solomon-sealevel.htm>

30. <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/solomon-sealevel.htm>

In response to the rising threat of sea level rise and tsunamis, the entire community of the Choiseul is relocating. Choiseul is a township located on Taro Island in Choiseul Bay. They are building a new town on an adjacent mainland, to which the population will be moved in different phases.<sup>31</sup> The move is within their customary land which was previously uninhabited and thus there have been no conflicts (no receiving communities) and the communities may have less attachment to their land as the township on Taro Island only became well-established after World War II.<sup>32</sup>

On the Ontong Java Atoll, flooding and coastal erosion are disrupting communities and some settlements have already relocated inland.<sup>33</sup> In Palau, one of two main villages in the Ontong Java Atoll, significant coastal area has been eroded away, forcing people to move inland.<sup>34</sup> Migration to Honiara is likely to occur, as the impacts of climate change increase. Residents favor the opportunity to relocate to a larger island, though the costs and social disruption involved are worrisome.<sup>35</sup>

## THE MARSHALL ISLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

High waves in 2008 displaced about 700 people in Majuro and Arno atolls.<sup>36</sup> High tides and storms are making the island of Kili uninhabitable and inundations are becoming a monthly occurrence.<sup>37</sup> In March 2014, "king tides caused the government to declare a state of emergency, as 940 people were evacuated from their homes."<sup>38, 39</sup>

In March 2015, the Marshall Islands Bikinian people gathered to discuss resettlement options. They wish to move from Kili islands, where they have lived for decades, due to increasing flooding from high tides and storms. Liaison officer, Mr Niedenthal, says, "Leaders met with the US Assistant Secretary of Interior to discuss their concerns and are hopeful of a positive resolution."<sup>40</sup> A sand sea wall is being built in Majuro atoll to protect the island from King Tides. Although, both scientists and islanders question the effectiveness of such sea walls.<sup>41</sup>

31. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/township-in-solomon-islands-is-1st-in-pacific-to-relocate-due-to-climate-change/>

32. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/township-in-solomon-islands-is-1st-in-pacific-to-relocate-due-to-climate-change/>

33. <https://www.sprep.org/attachments/Publications/CC/PACCTechRep4.pdf>, page 20

34. <https://www.sprep.org/attachments/Publications/CC/PACCTechRep4.pdf>, page 20

35. <https://www.sprep.org/attachments/Publications/CC/PACCTechRep4.pdf>, page 20

36. <http://www.sprep.org/attachments/Publications/CC/PACCTechRep5.pdf>, page 16

37. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/269403/bikini-people-ponder-settlement-options>

38. <http://www.rtcc.org/2014/10/15/concern-mounts-in-marshall-islands-as-high-tides-swamp-capital/#sthash.AP49hu4k.dpuf> from <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/ss-2014-000032-mhl>

39. <http://www.rtcc.org/2015/02/24/as-sea-levels-rise-climate-change-threatens-entire-pacific-cultures/?hootPostID=86d0f863ef75a99955dc8e560ba8fdc0>

40. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/269403/bikini-people-ponder-settlement-options>

41. *Ibid.*

Non-economic loss and damages, such as culture and identity, are becoming a major concern for Marshall Islanders.<sup>42</sup> They are speaking out about their growing fears and advocating for support; a group of Pacific Climate Warriors has travelled in traditional hand-made canoes to Australia to tell their story.<sup>43</sup> In March 2014, "almost 100 homes on the capital atoll Majuro were destroyed by a combination of high tide and big swell" and more than 900 people were placed in shelters.<sup>44</sup> It has been reported that families have since "returned to live in homes half collapsed into the sea."<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, predicted increases in El Niño and El Niña events, which are typically followed by dry periods in the Marshall Islands may lead to severe drought. After a very weak El Niño in 2013, "the northern atolls were hit by a severe drought. Food and water were delivered to desperate communities. Production of coconut oil, one of the country's only exports, fell by almost a third, a loss of close to US\$2.5m or 1.5% of GDP."<sup>46</sup>

Migration can be one way of coping with climate change impacts. Researchers have found that migration has been a traditional coping strategy for centuries and thus rather than viewing migration as a last resource, migration could become "a new way for people to diversify agricultural livelihoods in response to climate change impacts."<sup>47</sup> It should be noted, however, that migration does not always lead to a more stable life. There are indeed cases, especially with migration into urban poor communities, in which people have been exposed to new and different risks and threats.

Nonetheless, this is a key policy area that deserves further exploration and consideration. Specific policies could, for example, support education programs and assist people to move from risky areas by allowing the choice for migration. Also, the strengthening of infrastructure both in places of origin, where possible, and in informal urban settlements to which people migrate is important. The UK Climate Change and Migration Coalition stresses that "by not addressing migration, development organizations could be devaluing a prominent and important adaptation strategy."<sup>48</sup>

42. *Ibid.*

43. <http://www.rtcc.org/2014/10/15/concern-mounts-in-marshall-islands-as-high-tides-swamp-capital/>

44. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/losing-paradise-the-people-displaced-by-atomic-bombs-and-now-climate-change>

45. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/losing-paradise-the-people-displaced-by-atomic-bombs-and-now-climate-change>

46. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/losing-paradise-the-people-displaced-by-atomic-bombs-and-now-climate-change>

47. <http://climatemigration.org.uk/migration-as-adaptation-new-briefing-paper/>

48. <http://climatemigration.org.uk/migration-as-adaptation-new-briefing-paper/>



# RECOMMENDATION 4

## PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND EDUCATE TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL VALUES AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

The fear of the loss of culture and identity is a common concern of Pacific Islanders when discussing climate change and migration. Pacific cultures generally have inherent ties between the identity of the people and their belonging to “The Land”. Therefore, it is clear how climate change can threaten these elements of cultural well-being. Though still considered as the last resort, migration is becoming a necessity for some to survive. It is vital that governments, along with the affected communities, develop strategies to address the preservation and continuity of culture, especially for those who are forced to leave their land. A key way to achieve this is to facilitate intercultural dialogue and cultural exchange between countries and communities, promoting tolerance, respect, and freedom of cultural practices through educative programmes and exchanges aiming at the development of intercultural values and respect for diversity.

The Marshallese poet, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner writes about the survival of Pacific cultures in the face of climate change. When discussing the focus of adaptation on the physical changes to the earth, she asks, “[b]ut what about our culture? Culture, or man it as we call it, is incredibly important to Marshallese people. It’s what defines us. So what about the possibility of cultural preservation? Can this be another form of climate adaptation?”<sup>49</sup>

In order to address the loss of cultural heritage, Tulele Peise (Carteret Island, Papua New Guinea) is attempting to integrate cultural and spiritual dimensions into their relocation and resettlement plans:

*“[I]t envisages the establishment of a regular sea transport service for freight and passengers in order to maintain links between relocated people and those clan members who will stay put, and of a Conservation and Marine Management Area around the sinking Carterets so as to maintain the area as customary fishing ground and thus keep the links to the ancestral land (even if it might have disappeared from the earth’s surface).”<sup>50</sup>*

This example serves to remind us that resettlement is a very technical and complex issue, which also has highly important cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions: “Tulele Peisa is taking this dimension into account by stating as one of its objectives to ‘assist Carteret people to overcome fear, anxiety and trauma associated with the need to leave their homeland’.”<sup>51</sup>

One way to address this challenge may be to strengthen ties with Pacific Diasporas. The links between diaspora communities and villages at home, through churches, sporting groups and other clubs, are very important for maintaining identity.<sup>52</sup>

49. <http://www.rtcc.org/2015/02/24/as-sea-levels-rise-climate-change-threatens-entire-pacific-cultures/#sthash.EZeE-bKBd.dpuf>

50. *Challenges and Pitfalls of Resettlement Measures: Experiences in the Pacific Region*, Volker Boege, page 15

51. *Challenges and Pitfalls of Resettlement Measures: Experiences in the Pacific Region*, Volker Boege, page 15

52. *Challenges and Pitfalls of Resettlement Measures: Experiences in the Pacific Region*, Volker Boege, page 23



Pacific diaspora groups “regularly raise funds for community development projects in their home villages and islands” and it is also common that people living abroad travel home for Christmas and other special occasions “in order to renew their ties to the land and their families and thus get strength for another period of time detached from land and kin.”<sup>53</sup> Another affordable way to strengthen ties among diasporas and between them is to allow the development of good communication systems, particularly by providing internet connections, which allow the development of media spaces and techno spaces useful to keep in constant contact with communities of origins, family and friends.<sup>54</sup>

In order to address the stresses that climate change and migration bring to cultures, Pacific Islanders will need to develop successful communicative systems. These may take the form of educational programs, both in public schools and separately as vocational training centres, strengthening of ties with Diaspora, and promoting intercultural dialogue and intercultural exchanges across national borders and ethnic communities. The promotion and acceleration of cultural exchange should also underline the positive aspect of migration as a ‘way of life’, whilst recognizing the will of the people who express the desire to keep their social and cultural identity and live in their own countries into the future, whenever possible.

53. *Challenges and Pitfalls of Resettlement Measures: Experiences in the Pacific Region*, Volker Boege, page 23

54. Bello, V. (2014) “Virtual belongings, dual identities and cultural discomforts: The role of Mediaspaces and Technospaces in the integration of migrants”. *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture*, Vol. 5 Issue 2-3: 213-230.

# RECOMMENDATION 5

## MONITORING AND DEVELOPMENT OF DATABASES

The United Nations has listed the lack of data on the scale and patterns of possible climate change-related migration as one factor that impedes many Pacific Governments to develop comprehensive adaptation strategies and policy options also with regard to migration.<sup>55</sup> The call for improved data collection to answer questions relating to the scale and patterns of movements is not new. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Secretary General in his remarks to the Post-2015 Development Agenda have been stressing the need for improved data collection methods on the nexus between migration and environmental change. Despite these recommendations, data collection on migration in the Pacific remains a major challenge that needs to be addressed.

One challenge to address this dearth of data lies with the fact that many people are displaced internally, leaving no records of movement. Also, there is a lack of a common and standardized definition of what constitutes a situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>56</sup> In South East Asia, studies have shown that “lack of such data was a barrier to providing an adequate response to the needs of the most vulnerable IDPs”.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the present challenges to gathering data in the Pacific are:

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are an option for identifying low-lying settlements and populations however current elevation data are insufficiently robust;

Proximity to the coast is a possible indicator, but does not consider the elevation of settlements or the role of coastal resources in cash-based or subsistence livelihoods;

Estimates on the number of people likely to suffer climate change impacts are difficult to make, and estimates for those affected that may migrate are even more difficult.<sup>58</sup>

Because most migration data are not disaggregated by gender, the analysis of the gender implications of climate change related migration is particularly scarce: “Most insights into the gendered characteristics of migration within, among and beyond the Pacific have come from ethnographic and qualitative research.”<sup>59</sup>

In order to develop sound policies to address climate induced migration in the Pacific, the lack of up-to-date data on migration patterns and trends needs to be addressed. Tackling some of aforementioned challenges is difficult and thus should be met with a joint effort from States. It is recommended that assessments are made at the regional level, and that Pacific Countries monitor progress through national and regional databases.

55. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Climate-Change-and-Migration-Issues-in-the-Pacific.pdf>, page 8

56. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201505-Global-Overview-2015/20150506-global-overview-2015-en.pdf>, page 56

57. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201505-Global-Overview-2015/20150506-global-overview-2015-en.pdf>, page 57

58. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Climate-Change-and-Migration-Issues-in-the-Pacific.pdf>, page 18

59. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Climate-Change-and-Migration-Issues-in-the-Pacific.pdf>, page 31

# RECOMMENDATION 6

## A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH

When developing policies to address climate induced migration, States should make sure that their efforts are in line with human rights standards and obligations, and by placing the migrant at the centre of policies and by paying particular attention to marginalised and vulnerable groups of migrants. It is also necessary to include migrants in relevant national action plans and strategies, such as plans “on the provision of public housing or national strategies to combat racism”.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, States must live up to their obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all individuals under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or origin. This includes ensuring that migrants have access to fundamental economic and social rights, such as the right to health and education.

Mary Robinson, the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Climate Change, has stressed the importance of a human rights and development approach to climate change. She argues that the issue of climate change cannot be left to governments and their leaders as it clearly a major human rights and development issue.<sup>61</sup>

A groundswell of civil society initiatives to place climate change and its impact on displacement on the international agenda at the 2015 UNFCCC negotiations is taking place. Moreover, human rights avenues, such as through the Universal Period Review held in Geneva have been used as an outreach platform for advocacy.<sup>62</sup> The ultimate goal is to “encourage the international community to take seriously a foreseeable global humanitarian and human rights crisis...and to develop a plan to manage it.”<sup>63</sup>

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Meg Taylor, spoke recently with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon about the potential for conflict from climate induced displacement. She outlined the need for increased cooperation between the United Nations and its regional partners and stressed the importance of addressing the human cost of climate change. She also “urged the UN to give more attention to the conflict between communities and the private sector over natural resource extraction” and stated that “the UN should focus on the potential for conflict over the access to and use of resources, particularly land and water”.<sup>64</sup>

60. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/MigrationAndHumanRightsIndex.aspx>

61. <http://business-humanrights.org/en/mary-robinson-calls-for-new-approach-to-climate-change-focusing-on-link-to-development-human-rights>

62. <http://blogs.law.columbia.edu/climatechange/2015/05/04/advocating-for-action-on-climate-displacement-in-the-context-of-human-rights/>

63. <http://blogs.law.columbia.edu/climatechange/2015/05/04/advocating-for-action-on-climate-displacement-in-the-context-of-human-rights/>

64. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/272797/pacific-forum-chief-sets-out-issues-for-un>





# RECOMMENDATION 7

## FURTHER RESEARCH ON MIGRATION AND CONFLICT

As this research project has emphasised, conflict and violence, in general, is also related to climate change through the issue of forced migration. On the other side, factors that increase conflict also make societies vulnerable to climate change. For example, it is estimated that armed conflict and violence have forced approximately 38 million people around the world to flee their homes. In 2014 alone, 11 million people were newly displaced, which is the equivalent of 30,000 each day.<sup>67</sup>

Climate change is expected to lead to increased competition for and conflict over natural resources. History has shown that major droughts and other agricultural crises have been closely connected with war and revolts.<sup>68</sup> Existing conflicts between groups of peoples are exacerbated when unpredicted or drastic changes in weather put a strain on ecosystems, particularly impacting those who live off the land i.e. subsistence livelihoods.

The International Institute for Environment and Development states that “the ability of communities to resolve these conflicts, so they can get on with their livelihoods, should therefore be considered an important part of adaptation.”<sup>69</sup> Many IDPs around the world live in marginalized areas that are environmentally and economically vulnerable. Poor infrastructure and limited access to water, healthcare and education put those displaced at greater risk. In Papua New Guinea, in 2010, thousands of IDPs were displaced as a consequence of inter-community violence and nowadays continue to live in extremely poor conditions.<sup>70</sup> The findings emerging from the current research project, suggest that climate change is also a source of human insecurity that creates tensions among those sharing natural resources and between those who compete for socio-economic resources, particular jobs, schools and houses in receiving countries. This competition over scarce socio-economic and natural resources may lead to increased levels of violence and conflict. As one particular report claims, “We are in the midst of a horrific negative spiral, where climate change makes conflicts uglier and new ones erupt over natural resources. Then violent conflicts amplify the impacts of climate change.”<sup>71</sup>

However, it is clear that climate change is not the sole determinant of instability but is rather a multiplying-factor where other vulnerabilities leading to both migration and conflict are present. The main challenges that have emerged in these research findings as root causes of conflicts are first of all cultural and identity vulnerabilities and losses (25%), followed by language issues (12%), climate change issues (12%) and some socio-economic issues, such as employment (10%), accommodation (9%), discrimination (7%), and access to school systems (6%). As the Pacific suffers severe damage and irreversible losses, there is a need to look closely at the impacts of migration and forced migration and how it can become the source of conflict and human insecurity in order to understand and combat these regional threats.

Implementing human rights standards in domestic level legislation is also important, i.e. human rights will soon be part of the Fiji Police Force’s curriculum.<sup>65</sup>

There are barriers to implementing a human rights approach into practice that will only be broken down through national, regional, and international cooperation. Governments need to address this issue with the understanding that respect for the human rights of migrants is not only a legal obligation, but is critical in order to ensure that migration is viewed as an opportunity and not only as a survival strategy. One of the major challenges for Governments will be to “give practical expression to these rights and to make them a reality in the daily lives of migrants.”<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup><http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=296172>

<sup>66</sup><http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/MigrationandRacism.aspx>

<sup>67</sup><http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201505-Global-Overview-2015/20150506-global-overview-2015-en.pdf>, page 7

<sup>68</sup><http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2014/10/10/Conflict-in-the-Pacific-islands-The-climate-dimension.aspx?COLLCC=2871025183&>

<sup>69</sup><http://www.iied.org/conflict-resolution-key-part-adaptation-north-darfur>

<sup>70</sup><http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201505-Global-Overview-2015/20150506-global-overview-2015-en.pdf>, 57-58

<sup>71</sup>[http://www.theecologist.org/blogs\\_and\\_comments/commentators/2843295/dont\\_mention\\_climate\\_change\\_europes\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_refugee\\_crisis\\_is\\_doomed\\_to\\_fail.html](http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/commentators/2843295/dont_mention_climate_change_europes_response_to_the_refugee_crisis_is_doomed_to_fail.html)



There is a significant need to understand the risks and opportunities that climate induced migration presents in order to develop both legal and governance frameworks as well as adaptive capacities for the most vulnerable. Indeed, the vulnerabilities experienced in the Pacific in relation to the impacts of climate change “are themselves a form of insecurity that will continue to result in the violent displacement of communities and indeed possibly entire nations.”<sup>72</sup>

Climate change and migration are amongst the greatest challenges to human security in our times. A variety of institutes are investigating such issues as climate change and human mobility; human mobility and human security; and cultural losses and conflicts. With some important exceptions, such as international networks on the theme of migration, there is no single research institute that can develop research projects and study all these different and interrelated aspects of forced migration and human security on its own. An example amongst the few attempts that are addressing this lack of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary work is the United Nations initiative that developed the Global Migration Group, an inter-agency group to deal with the complexity of the migration phenomena<sup>73</sup>.

Pacific Island governments should support research at interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary levels. In order to address the gap of research on understanding the conflict risks associated with climate change and migration, further investigation is needed. In-depth research would help guide Governments to engage in proactive and meaningful decision-making at both the international and national level in order to avoid conflict scenarios and threats to the Human Security of people as a consequence of forced migration in the future.

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72.[http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/2014RRC/3.\\_RRC\\_Manila/D114PP%20Timothy\\_Bryar\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/2014RRC/3._RRC_Manila/D114PP%20Timothy_Bryar_presentation.pdf)

73.See<http://globalmigrationgroup.org>



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erants (eg housing,  
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to improve and maintain  
character of migrants  
receiving countries  
unity / organisation  
e link between mig  
gatherings)

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**Additional information on this research project  
can be found at the webpage:**

<http://migration.unu.edu/research/forced-migration/pacific.html#outline>