



ENVIRON- MENTAL MIGRATION

**ANALYSIS AND
POSITIONING
REPORT**

sejours-catholique.org

 [caritasfrance](https://twitter.com/caritasfrance)
 [Secours Catholique - Caritas France France](https://www.facebook.com/SecoursCatholique)



**ENSEMBLE,
CONSTRUIRE
UN MONDE JUSTE
ET FRATERNEL**

CON- TENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
I. THE CONTEXT: MIGRATIONS FACING ENVIRONMENTAL UPHEAVAL	5
A. Increasingly threatening effects of climate change	5
B. Environmental risks are on the rise	5
C. An incomplete international law for environmental migrants	7
II. OUR CONVICTIONS: MIGRATION MUST BE OUT OF CHOICE	9
A. Protecting the environment	9
1. Battling climate change sustainably and effectively	9
2. Eliminating the harmful effects of state or private projects	10
B. Protecting vulnerable people	14
III. OUR POSITIONING: RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS THROUGHOUT THEIR MIGRATION JOURNEY	16
A. Promoting and spreading the right to information	16
B. Developing legal channels to migration without compromising dignity	17
C. Respecting fundamental rights in transit countries	18
D. ... and in the host country	19
IV. CONCLUSION	20
V. GLOSSARY	21
APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY FOR BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION POSITIONING	22

INTRODUCTION

For several years now, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has held a position in favour of the right to migrate¹ and the guarantee of effective access to basic rights for migrants throughout their path and regardless of their status.

Particular attention has been given to people in vulnerable situations, especially those who are forced to leave their living environments without adequate protections, in anticipation of or as a consequence of humanitarian, political, economic, or environmental threats. This is the case for **environmental migrants**. Such individuals might move in a preventive or forced manner in the face of rising waters, the growing intensity of sudden disasters or the decline in agricultural production as a result of environmental degradation, all without fitting into any legal framework that ensures their safety.

"The increase in the number of migrants fleeing poverty, together with environmental degradation, is tragic; these migrants are not recognized as refugees by international conventions and carry the weight of their lives adrift without any legal protection."²
(Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 24 May 2015)

Based on the report by Christian Aid,³ the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that **between 25 million and 1 billion people will be displaced by an environmental disruption⁴ between now and 2050**, relocating within their own country or across borders, either permanently or temporarily. This translates to **one person displaced per second**.⁵ In keeping with the alert issued by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Secours Catholique – Caritas France continues its commitment to migrants, with a particular focus on the vulnerability of environmental migrants.

Secours Catholique – Caritas France defines the term "**environmental migrant**"⁶ as any person who—mainly for reasons related to a sudden or progressive environmental risk or in anticipation of said risk—is compelled or has chosen to temporarily or permanently

1 Refer to the glossary: the right to migrate is understood as a fundamental and universal right that includes the right to emigrate—that is, the right to leave one's country and the right to immigrate, i.e. the right to enter a country other than one's own.

2 Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 24 May 2015.

3 Christian Aid Report, *Human Tide: The Real Migration Crisis*, May 2007. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/human-tide-real-migration-crisis-2007>

4 Please refer to the glossary.

5 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Migration and Climate Change*, 2008. <https://www.iom.int/migration-and-climate-change-0>

6 Please refer to the glossary.



Fishing is often unsuccessful in this Bangladeshi canal, whose water is also used to irrigate neighboring fields. Sabkhali, Bangladesh, June 2015.

GAËL KERBAOL / SCGF

leave their usual living environment and **cross a border**. Environmental migrants are not considered refugees and do not meet the criteria set out in the 1951 Geneva Convention.⁷ They must be distinguished from the “**internal environmentally displaced**”,⁸ a term that describes those who **do not cross internationally recognized state borders**.

The term “**environmental risk**” refers to sudden natural disasters, progressive changes in the environment, industrial or infrastructure projects by the state or the private sector that lead to changes in sustainable housing, industrial accidents, and the environmental consequences of conflicts.⁹

Through this document, drawing on the word of its international partners and national network, Secours Catholique – Caritas France sets out the context for people fleeing their living environments for environmental reasons (*Part I*), reasserts its assumptions about environmental conservation, international migration and the protection of vulnerable people (*Part II*), and defends the fundamental rights of environmental migrants along their migratory paths (*Part III*). ■

7 The Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) defines a refugee as anyone with a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

8 Please refer to the glossary.

9 Steve Lonergan, “The Role of Environmental Degradation in Population Displacement”, *Environmental Change and Security Project Report*, Issue 4 (Spring 1998), 1998.

I. THE CONTEXT

MIGRATIONS FACING ENVIRONMENTAL UPHEAVAL

Migration induced by environmental risks has been observed throughout human history.¹⁰ Nevertheless, ever since the beginning of the industrial era, there have been new anthropogenic causes of forced displacement, such as industrial destruction and pollution of the environment, which have resulted in an increase in environmental disasters. At the same time, **policies of securing and closing borders and the lack of adequate protection tools prevent migrants leaving for environmental reasons from travelling in conditions that respect their fundamental rights.**

A. INCREASINGLY THREATENING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is caused by an exceptional increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere (carbon dioxide, methane or nitrous oxide). These gases are emitted by human activities such as the use of fossil fuels (oil, coal, etc.) and methods of intensive livestock raising and farming, which also led to large-scale deforestation. These significant emissions of greenhouse gases have led to an **overall increase in worldwide temperature with local consequences**, resulting in a variety of phenomena with harmful impacts, such as rising sea

levels, floods, extreme weather events, droughts, recurrent floods, and so on.

The reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) demonstrate a **constant and exponential increase in average temperatures since the beginning of the industrial era**,¹¹ with increasingly hot recorded years and increasingly intense negative consequences. 17 out of the 18 warmest years on record have occurred since 2001;¹² 2016 marks the year with the highest temperatures on record;¹³ Arctic sea ice level dropped to its all-time low in July 2018;¹⁴ among others. Even without the 1.5°C increase in worldwide temperature by the end of the century, scientists are predicting irreversible runaway climate change with ever more dangerous impacts, especially for the most vulnerable.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS ARE ON THE RISE

The increase in the frequency and intensity of sudden natural disasters is the most visible cause of environmental displacement. In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines resulted in the forced displacement

10 "Migration has occurred for mainly environmental reasons throughout human history, from populations fleeing Mesopotamia for Europe 50,000 years ago to the Irish famine of the 1850s. Agriculture becoming difficult or impossible (for environmental reasons) is always the main driver of migration" as described by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Environmental Migrations*, 30/04/2016. <http://www.environmentalmigration.iom.int/les-migrations-environnementales>

11 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis*, 2013.

12 NASA, "NOAA Data Show 2016 Warmest Year on Record Globally", Press release, 18/01/2017. <https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-noaa-data-show-2016-warmest-year-on-record-globally>

13 Ibid.

14 National Snow and Ice Data Center, Boulder, Colorado, 02/08/2018. <https://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/>

of 4 million people.¹⁵ After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, nearly 2 million people had to flee their living environments.¹⁶ Seven years later, Hurricane Irma caused the displacement of 15% of the population of Cuba.¹⁷

Progressive risks, such as rising sea levels, have threatened millions and led to the further displacement of 8.6 million people in 2017. This amounts to nearly half of the total number of people displaced for environmental reasons in that same year.¹⁸ **One out of every ten people in the world currently lives in an area threatened by rising water levels.**¹⁹ Additionally, 17% of the surface of Bangladesh could be submerged as a result of a one-metre increase in sea levels, as demonstrated in a hypothesis put forward by scientists close to the IPCC.²⁰ Island micro-states such as Vanuatu, Tuvalu Archipelago and Kiribati are already vulnerable and are in danger of disappearing completely in the coming years.²¹

The increase in global temperature also affects **weather conditions** across the globe, with a significant impact on agricultural yields. When temperatures rise up to one full degree, cereal crop production decreases by approximately 5%, severely affecting global food security and causing population displacement.²² Somalia is currently experiencing a severe drought due to two consecutive seasons of low rainfall, which resulted in the forced displacement of 600,000 people between November 2016 and March 2017,²³ and has affected the food security of nearly three million people.²⁴ During the great drought that hit Syria between 2007 and 2011, more than 60% of Syrian soil was affected, with a total impact of 1.3 million people (out of 22 million in the country altogether).²⁵

15 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Typhoon Recovery in the Philippines/ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/fr/home/crisis-response/past-crises/philippines.html>

16 N. Gronewald, "Earthquake-Relief Officials in Haiti Hoping 2011 Brings Better Results", New York Times, 13 January 2011; IASC, "Haiti Earthquake Response, 6-month Report", page 22; and IOM, April 2010, as cited by F. Grünewald, A. Binder and Y. Georges (June 2010), page 7.

17 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Cuba. <http://internal-displacement.org/countries/cuba>

18 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement*, 2018.

19 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *AR5 Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, 2014.

20 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Report on Bangladesh Launch of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2014. <https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Report-on-IPCC-outreach-events-Bangladesh-.pdf>

21 François Gemenne: "Is Tuvalu a climate change laboratory? An empirical critique of the rhetoric of 'canaries in the coal mine'", *Revue Tiers Monde*, 2010/04 #204.

22 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2007: Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, 2007.

23 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Born into Drought: Somalia*, 2017. <https://www.iom.int/news/born-drought-somalia-2017>

24 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *State of Food and Nutrition Security*, 2017 et 2018.

25 Agnès Sinäi, "Climate Change Conflicts", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 2015. <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2015/08/SINA1/53507>



Hurricane Matthew destroyed this family's home in Jérémie and forced them to seek refuge in Port-au-Prince. May 2019.

CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCSF

This drought and its consequences are considered by some as a contributing factor to the civil war that has been raging there since 2011.²⁶

Approximately 15 million people are also displaced every year by **state or private projects that are harmful to the environment.**²⁷ In Indonesia, the Grasberg mine project required the expropriation of indigenous communities and the displacement of 15,000 people.²⁸ In Brazil, the construction of the Belo Monte Dam has brought about irreversible consequences for the environment. Caritas Brazil has mobilized to support the rights of indigenous peoples forced to move following the expansion of the project.²⁹ The impact of forced

26 Peter H. Gleick, Water, Drought, *Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria*, July 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-13-00059.1>

27 "United Nations Launches Global Plan to Strengthen Protection of Internally Displaced Persons", UN NEWS, 2018. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1007552>

28 Grasberg Mines, *Report by the Groupe International de Travail pour les Peuples Autochtones*, January 2012. <https://www.gitpa.org/web/PAPOUASIE%20OCC%20Mine%20Grasberg%20doc.pdf>

29 Caritas Brazil, *Descumprimento de plano não impede operação de Belo Monte*, November 2015. <http://caritas.org.br/descumprimento-de-plano-nao-impede-operacao-de-belo-monte/31708>

expropriation is all the more significant because it not only affects the livelihoods of indigenous peoples but also breaks the spiritual and constitutive bonds of their identity, important connections which unite them with their lands.

*"Our people have been driven from their lands for 35 years, and even today we are fighting for compensation."³⁰
(Caritas Brazil)*

While some individuals return to their lands after an environmental or climate event, others will rebuild their lives—out of desire or necessity—in a new habitat, inside or outside their country's borders.

C. AN INCOMPLETE INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS

People who move for environmental reasons face two options: cross a border or stay within the confines of their own country. Those internally **displaced**, meaning individuals who have not crossed a national border, **are protected by various legal instruments that prompt states to provide them with protection and assistance**, specifically the *Guidelines on the rights of internally displaced persons*,³¹ a non-binding instrument developed in 1998. *The Kampala Convention* strengthens this protection for the African continent, a region particularly affected by drought and soil depletion, with state parties committing to undertake *"the necessary measures to provide protection and assistance to people affected by internal displacement due to natural or human disasters, including climate change."*³²

*"Internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in the country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced."³³
(Article 1 of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement)*

By contrast, **the 26.4 million people³⁴ who travel outside their borders each year to avoid the harmful consequences of environmental and climate risks do not receive international protections.** Given that there was little to no knowledge of the importance of environmental and climate issues pertaining to migration at the time the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees was drafted, as well as its 1967 Protocol, these factors were not taken into account by the signatory states. This is why, at a time of unprecedented environmental crisis, the question has been raised about broadening Article 1A³⁵ of the Geneva Convention regarding people displaced for environmental and climate reasons.³⁶

The current international context, however, raises concerns that a reopening of discussions on the Geneva Convention could actually result in hurting the level of protection for refugees. Indeed, the general migration policy positions around the world often lead to practices that violate the fundamental rights of migrants, for example through policies of securing and closing of borders (whether in Europe or North America), detention systems for migrants that are becoming more prevalent across the globe, or discriminatory policies and practices that do not allow migrants to access fundamental human rights such as work, health or housing.³⁷

*"Could it thus be time to consider modifying the Geneva Convention? [...] Many fear that a number of states would take the opportunity to toss the Convention aside if amendments were to become a possibility, going as far as to withdraw their signatures. We thus find ourselves deadlocked. We have turned this ad hoc text into an untouchable 'talisman' out of fear that, if changes are ever put back on the table, people will try to get rid of it altogether."³⁸
(François Gemenne, political scientist, expert on migration linked to environmental changes)*

30 Caritas Brazil, *Ocupado canteiro de obras da usina de Belo Monte*, October 2011. <http://caritas.org.br/ocupado-canteiro-de-obras-da-usina-de-belo-monte/7651?s=belo+monte>

31 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 1998.

32 Article 5 §4 of *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons* (Kampala Convention), 2012.

33 Article 1 of *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, UNHCR, 1998.

34 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Estimates 2015*, 2015. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/global-estimates-2015-people-displaced-by-disasters>

35 Article 1 sub-section A of the Geneva Convention, considers a refugee as any person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

36 *Report on the First Meeting on Protocol on Environmental Refugees: Recognition of Environmental Refugees in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, Malé, Maldives, 14–15 August 2006.

37 For an analysis of current migration policies: Secours Catholique – Caritas France, *International migrations*, 2019, pages 14–16.

38 François Gemenne, "One convention in the hand is worth two in the bush", *Revue Projet* #358, June 2017.



Listening and unconditional reception of migrants at the Reception Point for Refugees and Immigrants of Caritas Dakar, Senegal, November 2018.

ÉLODIE PÉROT / SCCF

The Addis Ababa Convention on African States (1969)³⁹ and the **Cartagena Declaration in America (1984)**⁴⁰ broadened the causes defining refugee status under the Geneva Convention into any "*event that seriously disturbs public order in part or all of the country*", which could potentially include environmental factors. While these measures are encouraging, they remain too implicit and are not reflected in the national policies of the applicable states.

Environmental migrants outside the country to which they claim citizenship are therefore not covered by any legal text. While plans for the **Convention on the Status of Environmental Migrants** have been emerging for nearly a decade,⁴¹ the likelihood of one of them being internationally adopted remains low. Developed countries appear reluctant to engage in a

collective migration dynamic. This is why several civil society actors—including Secours Catholique – Caritas France—are actively deliberating on the legal vacuum for environmental migrants, in an effort to ensure that their dignity and fundamental rights are recognized and respected. ■

39 The Convention on the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Addis Ababa, September 1969.

40 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, Cartagena, Colombia, November 1984.

41 "Draft Convention on the International Status of Environmental Displaced Persons", *International Centre for Comparative Environmental Law (CIDCE)*, University of Limoges, 2008.

II. OUR CONVICTIONS

MIGRATION MUST BE BY CHOICE

Secours Catholique – Caritas France, in accordance with the Church's premise of the "right not to have to migrate",⁴² believes that the decision to migrate must always be the result of choice and should not be induced by the presence of binding factors. In this context, **people who do not wish to move must have the opportunity to stay on their land, and those forced to leave must be able to do so safely.** As such, greater focus must be placed on protecting people in vulnerable situations, including environmental migrants.

A. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

The degradation of the environment has serious consequences on health, the right to water, and food safety, and can also lead to the forced displacement of populations. In an effort to prevent environmental factors from negatively affecting the fundamental rights of all people, and so that the decision to migrate is not constrained by these factors, Secours Catholique – Caritas France is taking steps to combat the anthropogenic causes that are driving environmental risks. The organisation is taking action on ambitious public policies that help the transition away from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), denouncing projects and actions harmful to the environment and biodiversity, and advocating for mainstreaming the consideration of these issues in public policy and for consistency in all public policies in favour of environmental preservation.

⁴² As expressed in Pope Francis' message for the 2016 World Day of Migrants and Refugees: *"The Church stands at the side of all who work to defend each person's right to live with dignity, first and foremost by exercising the right not to emigrate and to contribute to the development of one's country of origin."*

1. Battling climate change sustainably and effectively

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is aware that climate change is one of the most important global threats facing humanity today. To address climate risks, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement highlight two complementary principles of action.

The first, **mitigation**, aims to stabilize global temperature by avoiding, limiting or absorbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The 2015 Paris Agreement lays the groundwork to keep the rise in global temperature at well below the 2°C mark by the year 2100 and to remain as close as possible to an increase of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.⁴³ To do so, state and private actors must work to *"achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century, on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty."* (Article 4)

For a successful transition to greenhouse gas neutrality, it is essential that states drastically reduce their emissions in all emitting sectors. This includes fossil fuels, the primary source of GHG emissions worldwide, as well as the development of low-cost, efficient and renewable energy-based energy models. At the same time, there is a need to rethink production and consumption patterns, with the totality of food systems accounting for more than

⁴³ A special IPCC report, published in October 2018, presents the great benefits of reducing warming to 1.5°C from the less ambitious target of 2°C. In this scenario, many of the negative consequences of global warming would be minimized.

a third of global GHG emissions.⁴⁴ Family farming needs to be strengthened and protected in order to ensure food safety for people, while moving away from high-emitting agricultural models, thereby reducing GHG emissions from intensive agriculture and the transportation of goods.

*"The protection of the environment represents a challenge for the whole of humanity; it is a common and universal duty for the greater good."⁴⁵
(John Paul II, Encyclical Centesimus annus)*

The second principle of climate action, **adaptation**, promotes measures that reduce vulnerability to the current or expected effects of climate change.⁴⁶ A country's ability to adapt to climate change depends on several factors, including its level of development, economic power and technological expertise. Many developing countries are particularly affected by climate change, not only out of underdeveloped adaptation but also because of the economic importance of climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture. However, such countries have historically contributed the least to GHG emissions. In accordance with the **principle of common but differentiated responsibility**, the international community must provide financial and technological support to countries that are particularly affected by climate change.

According to the principle of "**climate justice**", states must shape their climate policies according to their different responsibilities and capabilities in order to achieve an equitable distribution of climate protection and adaptation efforts. Such an approach must take into account not only different capacities of countries to combat global warming and adapt to its effects but also the different levels of current and historical greenhouse gas emissions by said countries.⁴⁷ Climate justice must be ensured between countries and between the different social groups within the same country. In this case as well, climate issues can have extremely different effects depending on age, gender or economic situation, for example,⁴⁸ along with a risk of human rights degradation in a broader sense across all populations affected or threatened by climate change.

44 IPCC, *IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems*, Summary for Policymakers, August 2019.

45 John Paul II, Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, 40: AAS 83 (1991) 843.

46 CCNUCC, *Adapting to a changing climate*, 2017. <https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/resources/adaptation-committee-adaptation-forum-video-documentary-adapting-to-a-changing-climate>

47 Steve Vanderheiden, "Climate Justice Beyond International Burden Sharing", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 2016.

48 United Nations, *World Economic and Social Survey 2016: Climate Change Resilience: An Opportunity for Reducing Inequalities*, 2016. https://wess.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WESS_2016_Report.pdf

"Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity."⁴⁹

(Paris Agreement, COP21)

A third element that must be considered in the fight against climate change is the Warsaw Mechanism on Climate Change for **loss and damage**, endorsed at the 2013 UNFCCC Conference of the Parties on climate (COP19). The term "loss and damage" refers to the negative effects of climate variability and climate change for populations despite coping and adaptation.⁵⁰ Now part of the Paris Agreement, the objective of the Warsaw Mechanism is to promote the implementation of approaches that address these adverse effects in a comprehensive, integrated and coherent way.⁵¹ This mechanism considers human mobility as an adaptation solution when the deterioration of the environment at the global level is such that it undermines the dignity and safety of populations. The ability to migrate through **planned relocation**, understood as the relocation of people to another geographical region, thus addresses the principles of loss and damage; resources must be allocated as stipulated in the Paris Agreement. Nonetheless, **migration must always be the result of a choice. Relocation plans must be chosen and planned in consultation with the populations concerned and not constrained by external actors.**

The response by most governments to environmental problems often includes the implementation of GHG mitigation policies, leaving behind and only showing nominal support for adaptation policies that are crucial for the most vulnerable populations. Yet **mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage are fundamental elements of any climate policy—elements which must receive the same political attention and the same level of ambition.**

2. Eliminating the harmful effects of state or private projects

GHG emissions and their consequences for climate change are not the only anthropogenic causes of forced displacement of populations related to the environment.

49 CCNUCC, *Preamble of the Paris Agreement* § 11, COP21, December 2015.

50 CCNUCC, *Loss & Damage: Evidence from the Front Lines*, November 2012.

51 UN Climate Change, *Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage*, 2015.



Fisherman on the banks of the Rio Magdalena, where many families have been displaced to allow the construction of port infrastructure for the transport of coal. Colombia, June 2018.

Other causes include soil pollution, contamination of waterways, flooding, expropriation of communities, and land grabbing. These are all harmful consequences of **industrial or infrastructure projects of state or private origins that threaten the security and survival of populations across all continents.**⁵²

In a consultation launched July 2018, more than 80% of the participating partners of Secours Catholique – Caritas France cited the adverse effects of state or private projects as a significant environmental risk in their geographic area.⁵³

"The Amazon and the indigenous peoples in that part of the country are suffering the greatest socio-environmental impacts of climate change, exacerbated by extractive projects, monocultures and mega-projects that destroy forests, pollute rivers and damage territories."⁵⁴
(Amazonian Center for Anthropology and Practical Application – CAAAP, Peru)

⁵² For further information: Ionesco, Mokhnacheva and Gemenne, *The Atlas of Environmental Migration*, 2016 (pages 64-67).

⁵³ Eight partners in Africa, four in Asia, six in Latin America and two in delegations, for a total of 20 of the 24 partners who participated in the consultation.

⁵⁴ Testimony of our partner CAAAP Peru, consultation partner in July 2018.

As a response to these practices, Goal 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) established in 2016 has advocated for industries, businesses and especially multinationals to take the negative effects of their projects on the environment into account.⁵⁵ In France, the duty of vigilance law obliges companies and organisations to identify and prevent human rights and environmental abuses⁵⁶ resulting from their own activities, those of the companies they control, and the activities of their subcontractors and suppliers with whom they maintain established business relationships.⁵⁷

There is an urgent need for both public and private actors to put an end to any project that has harmful consequences for the environment and human rights, and to respect the rights of indigenous peoples to have their lands at their full disposal. Secours

⁵⁵ "Encourage companies, particularly large and transnational corporations, to adopt sustainable practices and to incorporate sustainability information into the reports they provide" – Objective 12: Responsible consumption and production, SDG, implemented in January 2016. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/fr/home/sustainable-development-goals-old/goal-12-responsible-consumption-and-production/targets.html>

⁵⁶ The duty of vigilance law applies to companies employing "at least five thousand employees within the company and its direct or indirect subsidiaries, with a head office located on French territory, or at least ten thousand employees within the company and its direct or indirect subsidiaries, with a head office located on French territory or abroad."

⁵⁷ CSR Citizen Forum Report, *French duty of vigilance law of parent companies and holding companies*, July 2017.

"The increase in the number of migrants fleeing poverty, together with environmental degradation, is tragic; these migrants are not recognized as refugees by international conventions and carry the weight of their lives adrift without any legal protection."

(Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 24 May 2015)





The island of Gabura, in southern Bangladesh, is affected by the lack of fresh water and the salinity of the land. June 2015.



Woman activist from a Brazilian community in the state of Amazonas, committed to the defense of indigenous land and culture, June 2019.

XAVIER SCHWIEBEL / SCOF

Catholique – Caritas France considers the right to land as a cornerstone in the fight against climate change⁵⁸ and supports the work of its international partners to assert the right of indigenous peoples to have their territories at their disposal, while taking steps to combat expropriation carried out by certain public or private projects.

The state must not only demand that private actors respect environmental standards and human rights, but also ensure the coherence of public policies and the sustainability of any public policy or project vis-à-vis the environment. This involves the adoption of evaluation mechanisms to better understand the anticipated effects of an action or to observe and comprehend the effects of an action carried out in relation to the preservation of the environment, in all sectoral policies and with a human rights-based approach.

B. PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The difference between so-called “political”, “economic” or “environmental” migrations is irrelevant in a context where **the causes of displacement are multi-factorial**

and migrations are comprised of mixed movements.⁵⁹ As such, the categorization of migrants according to their status hinders the right to migrate and cuts off access to basic services for all. It is, therefore, necessary to consider migrants based on needs rather than status.

The most vulnerable populations must have accompaniment and protection for every stage of the migratory path. This accompaniment should be carried out with a view that does not discriminate vis-à-vis environmental migrants as opposed to any other type of migrant, nor migrants versus refugees, but aims to grant protection to any person in a vulnerable situation.

As described in the *Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations*,⁶⁰ the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) defines “**migrants in vulnerable situations**” as people who are not able to enjoy full human rights and who are at increased risk of violations and abuses. It lays out three factors that can increase the vulnerability of migrants: situations encountered along the way, the specific socio-economic identity of individuals, and the reasons for departure. With this last

⁵⁸ For further information: Secours Catholique – Caritas France, *Supporting the ecological transition, agroecology report*, October 2018, page 26.

⁵⁹ According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, mixed movements represent a migratory flow where migrants and refugees are using the same routes and means of transport to travel abroad. <http://www.unhcr.org/fr/migration-mixte.html>

⁶⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations*, 2018.

point in mind, OHCHR considers migrants who have been victims of natural disasters, climate change, or environmental degradation as vulnerable migrants. This viewpoint is also shared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁶¹

Indeed, **environmental crises are extremely acute for the poorest of the population—those without the means and infrastructure to prepare for the harmful effects.** Nationals in low and middle-income countries are on average five times more likely to be displaced due to extreme natural disasters than nationals of other states.⁶² Pre-existing inequalities between the rich and poor are exacerbated by environmental risks, which tend to impoverish the share of the population with the lowest income. According to a study of 89 countries, if no natural disasters had occurred in 2018, the total number of people living in extreme poverty would have decreased by 26 million.⁶³

Additionally, **environmental risks strip people of their land—often an essential element for their livelihoods—and leave them no choice but to venture out in search of a better situation.** This departure is usually carried out hastily and under poor conditions, without the proper financial means, and without adequate information on safe paths. For such individuals, already in a precarious situation due to their limited financial resources, migration only serves to exacerbate their vulnerability. In these cases, **migration represents not only a loss of land as a means of subsistence and income but also the loss of the cultural and spiritual ties that bind a population to a community and its environment.**

*"The common experiences of both ordinary life and scientific investigation show that the most serious effects of all environmental aggressions fall upon the poor."⁶⁴
(Laudato Si', Pope Francis)*

The pre-existing economic vulnerability of environmental migrants is further exacerbated by socio-cultural criteria such as gender, age or ethnicity. This dynamic applies to women, who are still mostly in charge of the supply of water and food, tasks made more difficult by climate and environmental change.⁶⁵ In the case of sudden disasters, women generally will also have less access to alerts, might not know how to swim, and might not even

be authorized to go outside alone.⁶⁶ This is also the case for indigenous peoples, whose lands are disappearing or becoming uninhabitable due to proximity of infrastructure or agricultural pollution affecting their land or nearby waterways.⁶⁷ Environmental disasters also can break up families, separating parents from their children. Minors who end up on their own are more vulnerable to risks they may encounter during their journey, including violence, abuse or trafficking. In 2016, more than 75,000 minors travelled alone along migration routes.⁶⁸

"Isolated and landlocked tribes face the greatest risk from natural disasters."⁶⁹ (New Caledonia delegation, Secours-Catholique)

As part of its actions and advocacy, Secours Catholique – Caritas France pays special attention to vulnerable populations such as environmental migrants. While these are often the poorest populations, as well as social groups with specific vulnerabilities (such as women, unaccompanied minors and indigenous peoples), **the legal vacuum surrounding environmental migrants prevents them from accessing effective and sustainable protection and can even increase their vulnerability.** ■

61 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Persons in need of international protection*, June 2017

62 Oxfam International, *Uprooted by Climate Change*, November 2017, page 27.

63 Stéphane Hallegatte, Adrien Vogt-Schilb, Mook Bangalore, Julie Rozenberg, *Unbreakable: Building the Resilience of the Poor in the Face of Natural Disasters*, World Bank, 2017, page 2.

64 Pope Francis, §48 de *Laudato Si'*, Rome, May 2015.

65 Christine Haigh, Bernadette Valley, "Gender and the Climate Change Agenda", *Women's Environmental Network*, 2010.

66 World Health Organization, *Gender and Health in Disasters*, July 2002.

67 Secours Catholique - Caritas France, *The commitment of our international partners*, 2018, page 38/Peru.

68 UNICEF, *Global trend: Forced Displacement in 2016, 2017*.

69 New Caledonia delegation of SCCF, Partner Consultation, July 2018.

III. OUR POSITIONING

RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS THROUGHOUT THEIR MIGRATION JOURNEY

For several years now, the issue of environmental migration has grown increasingly important on an international scale. The **Nansen Initiative**⁷⁰ is an international cooperative effort launched in 2012 by Norway and Switzerland that aims to establish a consensual protection agenda for environmental migrants, one which has resulted in the establishment of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD).⁷¹ The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted in September 2016 at the United Nations,⁷² resulted in the development of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*,⁷³ adopted in December 2018, which recognises the correlation between environmental crises and migration in its Objective 2. In both cases, these initiatives provide states with tools to address the issue of environmental migration without issuing binding standards.

The lack of a specific framework to ensure respect of fundamental rights for environmental migrants endangers their dignity, an element intrinsic to their status as a person. However, existing mechanisms such as the PDD or the Global Compact for Migration now enable states to engage in a multilateral dynamic to meet the needs and vulnerability of environmental migrants.

On the basis of existing practices and the dynamics initiated at the international level, **Secours Catholique – Caritas France now recommends that states put concrete measures in place to respect the fundamental rights**

of environmental migrants throughout their migratory path. These measures may ultimately form the basis of a new international legislative framework on the rights of environmental migrants that would act to fill the existing legal vacuum.

A. PROMOTING AND SPREADING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

People wishing to migrate for environmental reasons often face a critical lack of information. They have little knowledge about the existence of potential legal channels for migration.⁷⁴ As a result, such individuals take costly and dangerous paths where their safety and dignity could be compromised.

It is essential that people facing the decision whether or not to migrate to escape an environmental risk have all the information at their disposal: opportunities for emigration; risks within their country and throughout the migratory path; international legal standards for migrants, etc. In order to meet their international obligations, states must, therefore, put informational measures in place to inform migrants about their rights and the safe migration channels available at every step of the migratory path.

70 For further information: <https://www.nanseninitiative.org/>

71 For further information: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/>

72 United Nations, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, September 2016 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1.

73 Secours Catholique – Caritas France, *What is the Global Compact for Migration?* 2018. <https://isidor.secours-catholique.org/document/quest-ce-que-le-pacte-mondial-migrations-o>

74 Refer to the glossary: legal migration channels can take different forms such as humanitarian, study, work or visitation visas, family reunification, resettlement, lifting of visa requirements, etc.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Global Migration Group, *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations*, May 2018, Principal 16/§2. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/VulnerableSituations.aspx>

EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICES - BANGLADESH (OKUP) -

In Bangladesh, the international partner of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), has set up information campaigns to promote safe migration for Bangladeshi migrant workers.⁷⁵ While the project does not specifically apply to environmental migrants, it provides concrete examples of best practices regarding the development of the right to information, examples which could inspire the development of similar practices for environmental migrants.

In particular, the OKUP project aims to protect the rights of Bangladeshi migrant workers by facilitating their preparations for departure so that they are not dependent on malicious intermediaries. It also seeks to reduce the risks associated with the migration of migrant workers, and especially women (information campaigns, “pre-decision” courses, “pre-departure courses”, assistance for migrant wives, assistance for children of migrant women, etc.).

While environmental migrants often do not have access to specific information, **Secours Catholique – Caritas France encourages states to develop measures to help inform environmental migrants of their rights, and of the potential dangers and safe and legal channels accessible along their migratory paths.** These requests are based in particular on Principal 16 of *Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations*⁷⁶ and Objective 3 of the Global Compact for Migration,⁷⁷ which aims to provide accurate and timely information for everyone at all stages of migration.

75 For further information: <http://okup.org.bd/promotion-safe-migration-and-rights-of-bangladeshi-migrant-workers-phase-ii-in-partnership-with-caritas-luxembourg/>

76 “Information campaigns for migrants should provide information about their human rights and promote safe migration channels. Campaigns should not focus mainly or solely on preventing movement.” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Global Migration Group, *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations*, May 2018, Principal 16/§2.

77 United Nations, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, 2018, Objective 3.

B. DEVELOPING LEGAL CHANNELS TO MIGRATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING DIGNITY

Environmental degradation seriously undermines the fundamental right of every person to an adequate standard of living⁷⁸ for a variety of reasons. Loss of land affects the right to self-determination; reducing the quantity and quality of water resources has an impact on water, food and health rights; projects on land occupied by indigenous and peasant communities can have an impact on their rights to land, culture and housing; in the same vein, policies involving forced displacement⁷⁹ have an impact on rights to culture, self-determination and land.⁸⁰

In an attempt to preserve the fundamental rights of those facing environmental degradation, **the development of safe and legal migration channels must be considered and encouraged by states, hand in hand with measures to preserve the environment while protecting and promoting the right to land, so that people wishing to migrate in order to escape an environmental risk do so in a legal and safe manner.**

“In the event of environmental crises, migration can be a strategy for the survival and adaptation of the affected population.”⁸¹
(Jesuit Migrant Service, Mexico)

Objective 4 of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) encourages states to “*promote the development of policies and standards in areas of legal limbo*”. *The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* provides for the development of legal and humanitarian migration channels for people fleeing their country due to sudden natural disasters or progressive environmental degradation.⁸² In particular, the Compact encourages states to set up specific

78 Article 11 of the *International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted in 1966, implemented in 1976.

79 Please refer to the glossary.

80 Declaration by Dan Bondi Ogolla, Coordinator & Principal Legal Advisor, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2013.

81 Jesuit Migrant Service, Mexico, Partner consultation, July 2018.

82 Cooperate to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for migrants forced to leave their countries of origin due to slow-moving natural disasters, adverse effects of climate change and the degradation of the environment—such as desertification and rising sea levels—including developing resettlement and visa options in cases where adaptation or return to their country of origin is not possible.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

Soil erosion in Petit-Goâve, Haiti. May 2019.

humanitarian visas⁸³ and temporary work permits and encourages developing private sponsorships and planned relocation plans.

Secours Catholique – Caritas France argues that it is **both possible and desirable to make environmental migrants less vulnerable by developing legal migration channels**. These can take the form of visas (humanitarian, work or study visas), humanitarian corridors established through partnerships with civil society organisations,⁸⁴ or the lifting of visa requirements, either for a given population or for the purpose of family reunification, which enables family members to join a relative in a safe country. These existing mechanisms are often difficult to access and subject to highly selective criteria that environmental migrants are unable to meet.

The development of safe and legal migration channels from countries of origin or third countries can under no circumstances justify the erection of physical and legal boundaries—or the use of any other instruments—to contain people wishing to migrate outside of these channels. Firstly, because safe and legal migration channels are poorly developed and not accessible to all those who wish to migrate; secondly, the criminalisation of spontaneous migration increases the dangerous nature of such migratory paths and forces people to risk their lives to migrate. Mechanisms for safe and legal migration must not be accompanied by the criminalisation of “spontaneous” migration—which must be allowed to coexist.

83 New Zealand has been a pioneer on the subject. In November 2017, the country announced its focus on creating humanitarian visas for populations in the Pacific island microstates, territories which are particularly vulnerable to rising oceans and soil salinisation. (Radio New Zealand, NZ considers developing climate change refugee visa, October 2017, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/342749/nz-considers-developing-climate-change-refugee-visa>).

However, the New Zealand government appeared to renounce the project in late August 2018, following field research that reportedly demonstrated that a visa was probably inadequate as a response to climate migration (Thomas Manch, *Humanitarian visa proposed for climate change refugees dead in the water*, 29/08/2018, online, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/106660148/humanitarian-visa-proposed-for-climate-change-refugees-dead-in-the-water>, as seen on 30/08/2018).

84 For further information: <https://www.secours-catholique.org/actualites/refugies-le-pari-de-laccueil-citoyen>

C. RESPECTING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN TRANSIT COUNTRIES

As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) reaffirms in its report on the situation of migrants in transit, *“Migrants in transit risk a range of human rights violations and abuses, including because they have become destitute or stranded in the transit country and because they lack legal protection and are unable or unwilling to seek the protection of the country*

of transit.”⁸⁵ Environmental migrants—already vulnerable and lacking access to legal protection—are all the more fearful of the serious violations of their fundamental rights and dignity that they may be subjected to in transit countries.

To protect the fundamental rights of environmental migrants, Secours Catholique – Caritas France urges states to take measures to promote access to essential services for these populations, and to take the vulnerable situation of environmental migrants into account, specifically women, isolated minors and indigenous peoples. In particular, it encourages states to implement the recommendations of the Global Compact for Migration rapidly and without distinction—especially Objective 15, which promotes **access to basic services for all migrants**. States must also commit to respecting the Recommended Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders,⁸⁶ which stipulate that said states must protect and assist migrants at borders without discrimination. **Respect for fundamental rights—which includes respect for civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights—must inform any migration policy and the way in which states exercise their sovereignty.**

“By implementing the Global Compact, we [the State parties] ensure effective respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, across all stages of the migration cycle.”⁸⁷
(Global Compact for Migration)

D. RESPECTING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE HOST COUNTRY

While safe and legal channels afford migrants protection during their migratory path, there is no guarantee that the government of the country in which they wish to settle will offer the same guarantee. For instance, humanitarian visas granted by a government can enable people to enter a country’s territory through a legal migration channel but are not always accompanied by the provision of refugee status or subsidiary protection.

If it is to be effective, the development of safe and legal channels must be accompanied by the possibility

for environmental migrants to settle in the country of their choice, throughout the period of crisis facing their territory, or permanently if they so wish.

In order to achieve this, **Secours Catholique – Caritas France encourages developed countries—France in particular—to take environmental factors into account as legitimate grounds for claiming state protection and a legal residence permit**, such as subsidiary protection.

“Immigrants should be welcomed as individuals and helped, with their families, to integrate into social life.”⁸⁸ (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church)

It is not enough to simply host environmental migrants; they must also be enabled to become integrated in their receiving country. In order to make integration effective and successful, governments must initiate efforts to **change perspectives** on migration so that the residents of a given country do not consider migration as a negative factor, but rather as **an opportunity to start a dialogue around solidarity and fraternity.**

Through its actions in France and abroad, Secours Catholique – Caritas France promotes the creation of social links and integration assistance for all exiles, defending the right of migrants to live in dignity in a foreign territory. In accordance with its principles, it recommends that states implement Objective 10.2 of the SDG⁸⁹ as well as Objective 17 of the Global Compact on Migration, which aims to **eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote public discourse to change perceptions about migration, so that everyone can feel welcomed and protected.** ■

⁸⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Situation of migrants in transit*, January 2016, page 5.

⁸⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders*, 2015, Principle C. Assistance and protection from harm, §11, page 9.

⁸⁷ Preamble (§15) of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, 2018.

⁸⁸ Léon XIII, Encyclical *Rerum novarum: Acta Leonis XIII*, 11 (1892) 103; Jean-Paul II, Encyclical *Laborem exercens*, 14; AAS 73 (1981) 612-616; Id., Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, 31; AAS 83 (1991) 831-832.

⁸⁹ Objective 10.2 of the SDG: “By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.”

IV. CONCLUSION

The struggle to achieve recognition of the human right to migrate will be a battle fought over the long term. **Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its international partners must continue their fight to ensure that migration becomes a fundamental right, the prerequisite of which is respect for human dignity and unconditional access to fundamental rights for all people at all stages of the migratory path.**

Particular attention should be paid to those travelling for environmental reasons. Environmental crises and the consequences of global warming are driving an increase in forced displacement; they are exacerbating existing inequalities and will exacerbate the vulnerability of people who are already among the poorest on the planet. In the absence of a normative framework, environmental migrants are being drawn into a legal vacuum that undermines their fundamental rights and dignity. This is why Secours Catholique – Caritas France, along with other parties, is advocating for the adoption of a legislative framework to ensure that the fundamental rights of environmental migrants are respected throughout all stages of the migratory path.

The development of specific measures to address the situation of environmental migrants should be seen as the international community's first step towards the adoption of an international framework to guarantee the fundamental rights of these populations. **States are therefore asked to use existing spaces and tools to develop measures promoting the right to information, affirming the establishment of safe and legal migration channels and guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights of all, throughout all stages of the migratory path.**

The international community should ensure that different populations around the world are all able to enjoy their fundamental rights. In order to achieve this, countries should take action in accordance with their respective capacities and responsibilities—in particular, to combat environmental degradation, global warming and adaptation, to make sure that migration is a choice and not a necessity. ■

V. GLOSSARY

Adaptation: UNFCCC objective to limit the negative impacts of climate change and maximise its beneficial effects.

Mitigation: UNFCCC objective to stabilise global temperatures by promoting efforts to reduce or limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in order to keep a global temperature rise well below 2°C.

Forced displacement: an action by an external actor forcing a given population to leave its territory against its will.

Internally environmental displaced persons: persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence due to natural or man-made disasters, or to avoid their effects, and who have not crossed the internationally recognized state borders.⁹⁰

Right to migrate: a fundamental and universal right combining the right to emigrate, i.e. the right of an individual to leave their country, and the right to immigrate, i.e. the right of an individual to enter a country other than their own, with the guarantee that the individual's fundamental rights are respected throughout all stages of the migratory path, regardless of their status.

Fundamental rights: the inalienable rights of all human beings, regardless of their nationality, place of residence, sex, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, language, or any other condition. Fundamental rights are listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁹¹

Environmental migrants: persons or groups of persons who, primarily for reasons related to sudden or progressive environmental changes negatively affecting their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their habitual home or leave it on their own initiative, temporarily or permanently, and who cross a border to do so.⁹²

Refugee: someone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group

or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.⁹³

Planned displacement: a safe and legal migration channel and adaptation strategy in the face of a deteriorating living environment that allows populations to settle in another geographical region, in agreement with the populations concerned.

Environmental risks: sudden natural disasters, progressive environmental changes, state or private projects that result in sustained habitat changes, industrial accidents and the environmental consequences of conflicts.⁹⁴

Environmental disruption: an event of natural and/or climatic origin that leads to a transition from a healthy and secure environment to an environment that is harmful and dangerous for the populations living there. This term was first used in 1985 by El Hinnawi in the UNEP report *Environmental Refugees*.⁹⁵

Legal migration channels: channels that enable people to reach a third country in a legal and secure manner. These channels may take various forms, such as humanitarian visas, study visas, work visas or visit visas, family reunification, resettlement and relocation, humanitarian corridors, or the lifting of visa requirements.

90 Definition based on the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, Geneva, February 1998

91 HCDH, *What are human rights?* <https://www.ohchr.org/FR/issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx>

92 OIM, 2011, <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration>

93 Article 1.A of the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, United Nations, Geneva, 1951

94 *Classification of Environmental Factors*, Steve Lonergan, 1998

95 El Hinnawi, *Environmental Refugees*, Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1985, page 41

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY FOR BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION POSITIONING

Following the **guidance report issued in September 2017**, the International Advocacy Department at Secours Catholique – Caritas France has incorporated a transversal climate justice axis in its advocacy strategy for the 2017-2021 period. This axis is at the heart of three thematic areas of expertise developed in the Department: 1) the right to food and food security; 2) the economy at the service of the common good; and 3) international migration.

It was in keeping with the theme of international migration and to continue the work undertaken as part of the *Global Campaign on Migration* that the International Advocacy Department began reflecting on the theme of environmental migration in May 2018.

The International Advocacy Department carried out an analysis of the political opportunities and landscape centred on the theme, enabling it to establish its own expertise in the field. A mapping of French and international civil society actors working on the issue of environmental migration was then undertaken.

Willingness to work on the issue of environmental migration was also discussed at the International Migration Working Group of the International Action and Advocacy Division (DAPI, for its acronym in French), which supported the initiative and expressed its determination **to involve international partners in the reflection process**.

A consultation of international partners was subsequently carried out between July and September 2018, by drawing up and sending out a questionnaire covering three main themes: the environmental risks incurred in the region; knowledge of the phenomenon of environmental migration; and actions or courses of action carried out with regards to migrants.

This questionnaire was translated into four languages and sent to more than 50 international partners and 6 regional delegations in 27 different countries. Responses were received from 21 international partners⁹⁶ and three SCCF delegations,⁹⁷ representing a total of 17 countries.

At the same time, the International Advocacy Department undertook to meet several civil society actors working on the issue, from different spheres: researchers from universities, elected officials and non-governmental organizations were interviewed.

The analysis and positioning report on environmental migration was drafted on the basis of the responses of international partners and interviews conducted.

⁹⁶ Asia: Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) - Bangladesh: OKUP - Cambodia: ADHOC Cambodia - Republic of the Congo: Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (ECJP) - Columbia: CINEP - Colombia: CDPMM - Ivory Coast: Caritas Ivory Coast - Guatemala: Pastoral Social - Caritas de Verapaz (PSCV) - India: BSSS - India: MASS - Mauritania: Caritas Mauritania - Mexico: Fomento - Mexico: SJR-SJM - Peru: CAAAP - Democratic Republic of the Congo: Caritas RDC-Bukavu - Democratic Republic of the Congo: Caritas Kinshasa - Rwanda: Caritas Gikongoro - Rwanda: Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (ECJP) - Senegal: Caritas Senegal - Chad-Cameroon: GRAMP-TC - Thailand: GAATW

⁹⁷ Delegations from Réunion, New Caledonia and French Guiana

Document designed and produced by the Division of Communication and Generosity.

Drafting: International Advocacy Office - International Action and Advocacy Division

Contact: dept.plaidoyerinternational@secours-catholique.org

Cover photo: Gaël Kerbaol / SCCF

Layout: Editorial Production Department - January 2020



**ENSEMBLE,
CONSTRUIRE
UN MONDE JUSTE
ET FRATERNEL**

