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THE BENEFIT  
OF ALL

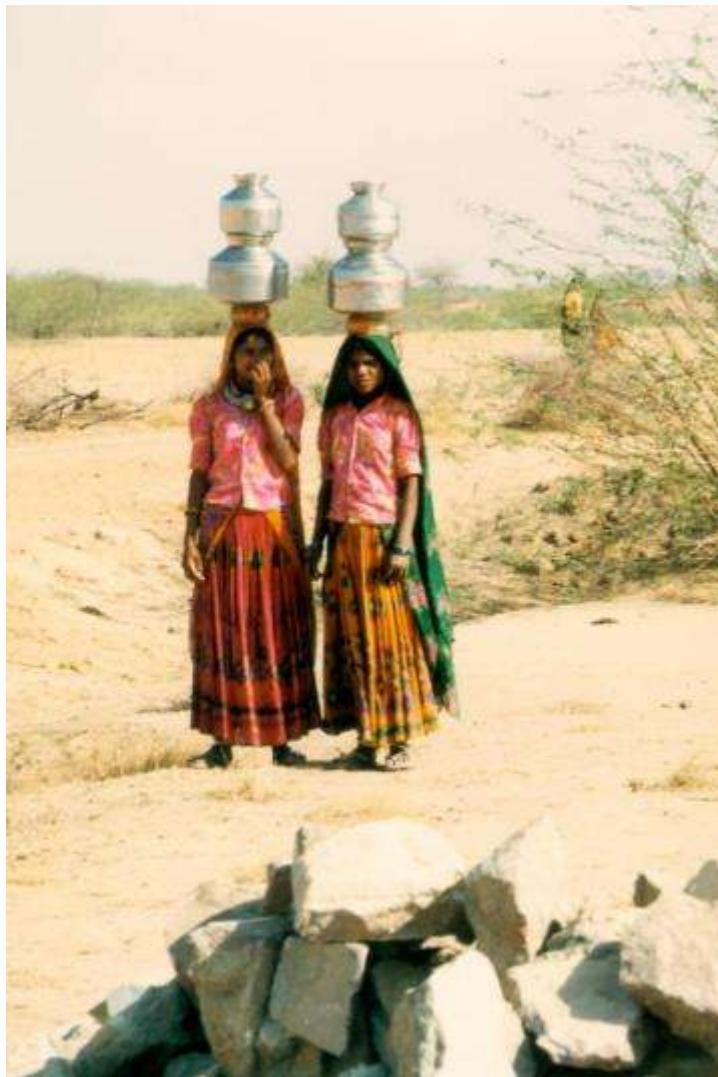
# THE MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE NEXUS: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL RESPONSES

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IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok, Thailand

# Plan of the presentation



- I. The Migration, Environment and Climate Change Nexus: A regional overview
- II. Global, regional and national responses to Migration, Environment and Climate Change
- III. IOM's work on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC)
- IV. Closing thoughts



# I. **The Migration, Environment and Climate Change Nexus: An overview**

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# The context

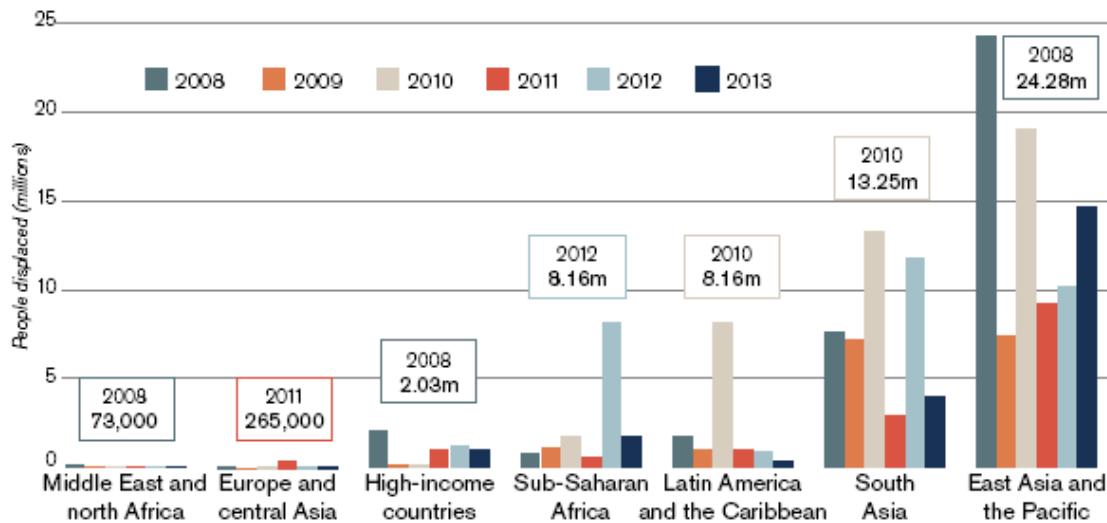


- Asia and the Pacific is home to 4 billion people (60% of the global total). Of these:
  - 1.8 billion live in poverty
  - 80 million are international migrants
- It is also the **most disaster prone and climate vulnerable** region in the world.
- The region accounted for **91%** of the world's total death and **49%** of the world's total damage due to natural disasters in the last century.
- In 2013, **19.1 million** people or **87%** of the global total of displaced populations due to natural disasters were recorded in Asia

# South Asia's Vulnerability to Climate Change and Natural Disasters

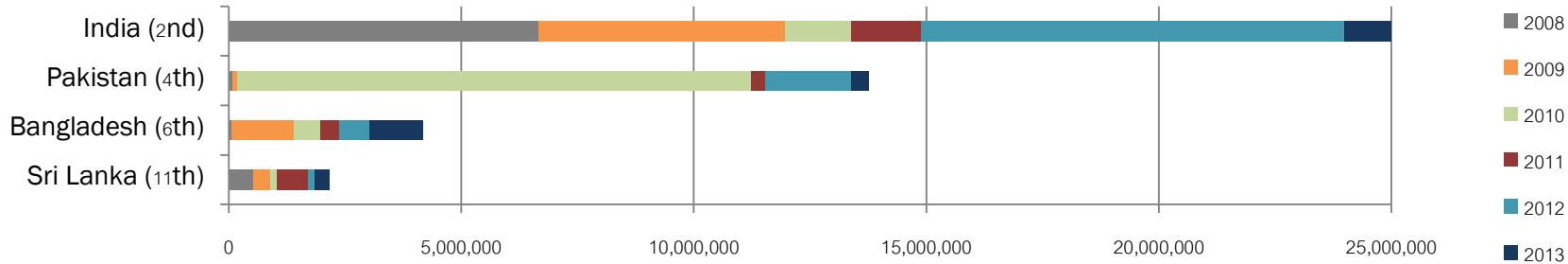
## Displacement due to natural disasters\*

A. Absolute (total people displaced), regional peak years highlighted



“ The impacts of climate change are likely to result in huge economic, social, and environmental damage to South Asian countries, compromising their growth potential and poverty reduction efforts.” – ADB Report

## Countries with highest displacement in South Asia (2008-2013)



# The South Asian migration context



- Population: 1.693 billion
- 2.5 m South Asian migrant workers leave their countries every year to work abroad
- Remittances as a percentage of the GDP:
  - Nepal: 28.8% (\$5.5 billion)
  - Sri Lanka: 9.6% (\$6.4 billion)
  - Bangladesh: 9.2% (\$13.8 billion)

India receives \$70 billion in remittances, making it the largest receiver globally

- Mixed migration flows in South Asia: refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants, unaccompanied minors
- There are 2.09 million refugees in the region and 2.93 million refugees originating from the region



II.

## **Global, regional and national responses to Migration, Environment and Climate Change**

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# MECC in the global discourse

## IPCC

- 1<sup>st</sup> Assessment Report (1990)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report (2013)



## UNFCCC

- COP 16 Cancun, paragraph 14(f)
- Rio+20
- Loss and damage framework



## Human Rights Council

- Resolutions on Human Rights and Climate Change



# South Asia's response to climate change and migration (1)



- **SAARC Summit, 2014 PM of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina:** The risks are so grave that, for Bangladesh, climate change may displace more than 30 million people by 2050.
- **BIMSTEC Summit, 2014:** “called for a legal framework to ensure social, cultural, and economic rehabilitation of **climate migrants**”

UNGA, 11 October 2009:

*“What is alarming is that a metre rise in sea level would inundate 18% of our land mass, directly impacting 11% of our people...of the billion people expected to be displaced worldwide by 2050 by climate change factors...one in every 7 people in Bangladesh, would be a victim.....Bangladesh would.... make a strong call for climate migrants at COP 15 to consider a new legal regime under the UNFCCC Protocol ensuring **social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of climate induced displaced migrants.**”*

# South Asia's response to climate change and migration (2)



- In 2009, Government of the Maldives' organized an underwater cabinet meeting
- Advocacy in the Human Rights Council --> 3 resolutions on Human Rights and Climate Change (2008, 2009, 2011)

*“Concerned that climate change poses an immediate and **far-reaching threat to people and communities** around the world and has **implications for the full enjoyment of human rights**” – HRC 2008*

# South Asia's response to climate change and migration (3)



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, UNGA speech 2014:

*“Extreme weather patterns are disrupting world economies...The monsoon floods in Pakistan **have killed hundreds of people, displaced millions, destroyed and damaged homes, livelihoods, infrastructure, cattle and crops**. We are mobilizing all our resources and ingenuity to provide relief and to ensure recovery.*

*The international community should intensify its efforts to move from awareness to commitments to actions on climate change, which is playing havoc with the economies, particularly in the developing countries.”*

# Some National responses to Climate Change and Migration

- Maldives proposing to buy land from India/Australia + Creation of artificial Islands;
- Bangladesh's BCCSAP recognizes environmental refugees and migration as a “valid option”; NAPA activities attempt to halt migration to cities
- Pakistan's NCCP recognizes climate induced migration
- Sri Lanka: proposed relocation of coastal communities as an adaptation method
- Many national policies (NAPAs, communication to the UNFCCC etc of India, Nepal and Bhutan) recognize link between environment, natural disasters and migration- and the impact of migration on the environment; *But no activities on climate change and migration in the NAPAs*
- *Only* Pakistan and India have Ministries on Climate Change





# Regional Response to Climate Change and migration

Organization	Response to Climate Change	Inclusion of Migration?
ASEAN	ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change	No mention
	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response	No mention
BIMSTEC	Climate change and Environment and disasters are priority areas for cooperation	No mention
Colombo Process	Dhaka Declaration	Mentions climate change
SAARC	Thimpu Statement on Climate Change 2010  18 <sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit Declaration, 2015	No mention  Mentions 'existential threats' posed by climate change
PIF	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change	No mention
	Niue Declaration on Climate Change	Urges partners to provide support in case of relocation

# SAARC: Relevant text on the Human Impact of Climate Change

“They directed the relevant bodies/mechanisms for effective implementation of SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters, SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment and Thimphu Statement on Climate Change, **including taking into account the existential threats posed by climate change** to some SAARC Member States.”

- 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit Declaration, Kathmandu 2014

“Expressing deep concern about the adverse effects of climate change and its impact on the region, particularly **on the lives and livelihoods** of the 1.6 billion people of South Asia”

- Thimpu Statement on Climate Change, 2010

“noted the urgency of the immediate need for dealing with the **onslaught of climate change including sea level rise....** called for an in-depth study on “Climate Justice: The Human Dimension of Climate Change,” to **come up with a rights-based approach that would highlight the human impact when responding to the impacts of climate change.”**

- 15<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit Declaration, Colombo 2008

# The challenge

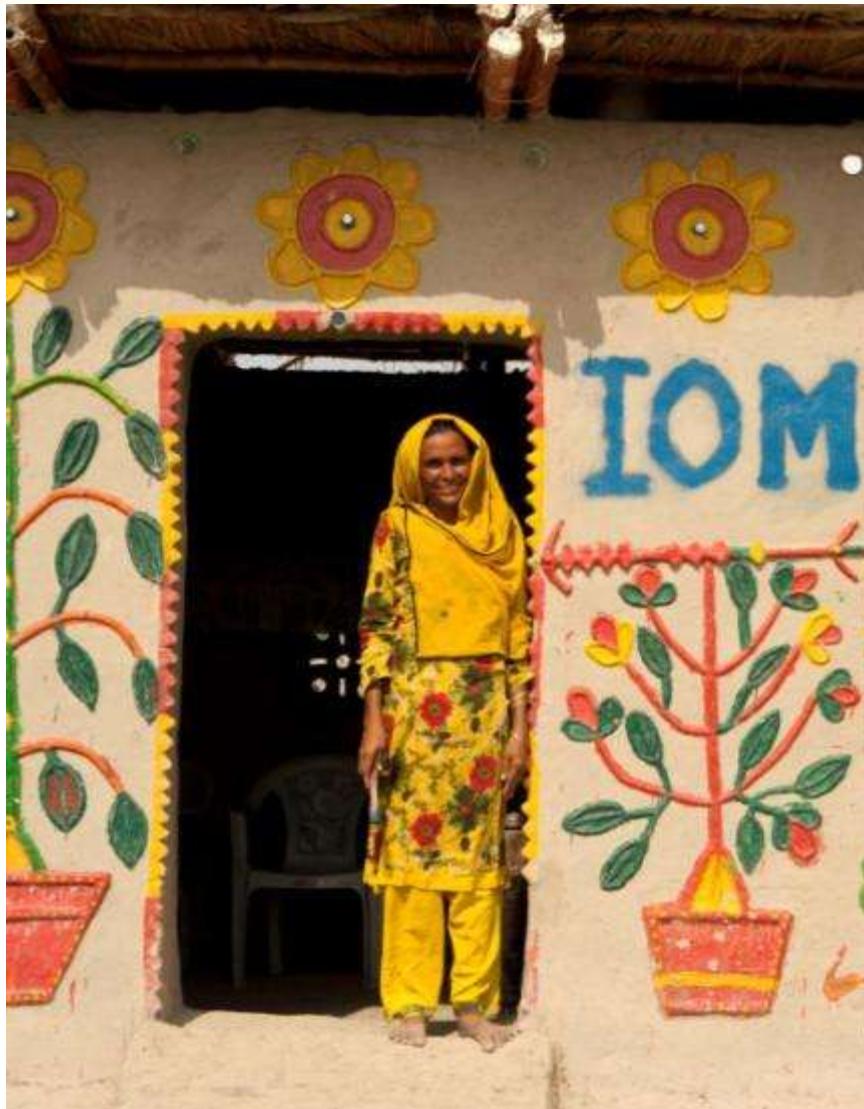


Image Source: Oxfam Ireland

Why is there a gap between global and regional pronouncements and national actions?

Top Down vs. Bottom Up approach?

# Limitations



- Lack of evidence and research; No consensus on terminology
- Over emphasis on the negative dimensions of migration – *failure to adapt*
- Political sensitivities- [Over] Securitization of the impacts of climate change on migration
- Limited collaboration at the national and regional level; lack of political will
- No dedicated agency to promote migration as a strategy for adaptation; limited CS pressure



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### III.

# IOM's Work on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC)

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# IOM's Approach

- IOM's central objectives in managing environmental migration are:  
Minimize forced migration; Assist when forced migration occurs; Manage migration to reduce vulnerability
  - In view of IOM's growing work in this area, a **MECC division** has recently been created
  - The Regional Advisor for Climate Change and Migration provides technical support in the Asia-Pacific region
  - IOM works to promote migration as a strategy for adaptation
  - IOM also aims to strengthen linkages with other policy domains especially disaster risk reduction and sustainable development to build resilience and reduce vulnerability in the long term
- 
- ```
graph LR; A((1. Preventing)) --> B((2. Preparing)); B --> C((3. Managing)); C --> D((4. Mitigating)); D --> E((5. Addressing))
```

# IOM's Approach



**Top Down:  
Research  
and Policy  
Development**

**Bottom Up:  
Community  
-based  
initiatives**



# IOM's research and platforms for policy discussion

- IOM has over thirty titles dedicated to migration, environment and climate change issues.
  - Assessing the evidence research: Bangladesh
  - Issue in Brief: Human Rights, Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration: A New Paradigm
- Regional Training on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, Seoul, 2013
- International Dialogues on climate change and migration - including regional, national dialogues and IDMs in 2011 & 2012
- Contributions to UN led process (UNFCCC and Sustainable Development conferences)



# Assessing the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia (Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal)

- IOM has recently rolled out a project in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal to assess the evidence of the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia.
- This project will contribute to national and regional policies which address the expected impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement.
- The project will culminate in a regional level dissemination meeting.





# Climate Change and Migration Projects in Asia and the Pacific

## Completed

Addressing Climate Change and Migration in the Mekong Delta in Southern Viet Nam (ACCM)

Climate Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Education, Federal State of Micronesia (CADRE)

## Active

Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy in Dominican Republic, Haiti, Kenya, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam (MECLEP)

Assessing Vulnerabilities and Responses to Environmental Changes in Cambodia

Building Capacity of Papua New Guinean Government to Respond to Climate Change and Engage Grassroots Structures in Development Planning for the Atolls

Assessing the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia (Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal)

IV.

# Closing thoughts



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# Recommendations



- Enhance research
- Raise awareness at all levels through greater dialogue amongst different stakeholders and countries (including CS and Community Based Organizations)
- Promote migration as an adaptation strategy
- Encourage regional collaboration; mitigate negative effects on all populations
- Pending a consensus on the protection regime, develop guidelines and SOPs
- Training and information for policymakers



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