Report

# Reducing the risk of protracted and multiple disaster displacements in Asia-Pacific

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## Boxes



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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADPC** | Asian Disaster Preparedness Center |
| **APMCDRR** | Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction |
| **DRR** | disaster risk reduction |
| **DRM** | disaster risk management |
| **DTM** | Displacement Tracking Matrix |
| **FRDP** | Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific |
| **GRAF** | Global Risk Assessment Framework |
| **IASC** | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| **IDMC** | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| **IDP** | internally displaced person |
| **IFRC** | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **NDMA** | National Disaster Management Agency |
| **OCHA** | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| **OHCHR** | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **SIDS** | small island developing states |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNDRR** | United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction |
| **UNECOSOC** | United Nations Economic and Social Council |
| **UNEP** | United Nations Environment Programme |
| **UNESCAP** | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| **UNFPA** | United Nations Population Fund |
| **UNHCR** | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **UNOPS** | United Nations Office for Project Services |
| **WFP** | United Nations World Food Programme |

# 1 Introduction: in pursuit of prevention

Displacement is not an inevitable outcome of hazardous events, and yet protracted and multiple disaster displacements are a lived reality for thousands of people across Asia-Pacific. Figures on displacement from a range of intersecting threats and risks are staggering. Across South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific in 2018, tropical storms, monsoon floods, conflict and violence displaced 13.4 million people; 9.6 million new displacements were recorded in East Asia and the Pacific, and 3.8 million in South Asia (IDMC, 2019). Evidence on the current impacts of climate variability and change and future climate risks points to the likelihood of protracted and/or multiple displacements becoming an ever-increasing trend across the region, in the absence of sustainable risk-informed development.

This paper focuses on repeat/multiple and protracted displacements caused by natural hazard-related disasters in Asia-Pacific, including those influenced by climate change and climate variability. It explores the underlying risk drivers of natural hazard-related disaster displacement (hereafter referred to as 'disaster displacement'), and the factors that influence whether these disaster displacements become multiple and/or protracted. We focus on protracted and multiple disaster displacements as these are the type of displacements which are rarely tracked and are not systematically addressed by National Disaster Management Agencies (NDMAs) or operational non-governmental organisations through disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts. Displaced people are often among the most vulnerable in society and in need of support and protection. People who are displaced repeatedly or for long periods are often 'dependent on humanitarian assistance or live far below the poverty line in substandard housing without security of tenure, and with no or only limited access to basic services, education and health care' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 4). For a complex set of reasons, such individuals are often unable to 'take steps for significant periods of time to progressively reduce their vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization and find a durable solution' (ibid: 4).[1]

Interventions designed to prevent disaster displacement are not sufficient to curb current trends – as exposed by the substantial displacement figures given above. While individual experiences of displacement events vary, a well-established body of evidence makes clear the detrimental impacts on livelihoods and well-being – such as mental health issues, including stress and mental trauma (WMO, 2020), loss of earnings, disrupted schooling, entrenchment of poverty and strained social relationships. Too often, displacement events generate unmet needs, result in abuses of human rights and violence and exacerbate pre-existing marginalisation and exclusion. Some individuals – including stateless persons[2] – can experience

1 Individuals' exposure, vulnerability and capacity to deal with natural hazards, climate variability and change are based on the different social, economic, cultural, political and environmental contexts in which they live, and these factors will influence people's ability to prepare for, cope with and respond to environmental shocks and stresses (Lovell et al., 2019).

2 UNHCR defines a stateless person as 'a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law' (UNHCR, n.d.).

what is effectively continuous displacement without a specific location to 'return' to.

It is hardly surprising therefore that disaster displacement risk, and the specific needs of displaced people, are widely recognised as a developmental and human rights challenge in several global policy frameworks towards 2030, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR, 2015), the Paris Climate Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (UN, 2016a), the Agenda for Humanity (UN, 2016c), the New Urban Agenda (UN, 2017), the Global Compact on Refugees (UN, 2018a) and the Global Compact for Migration (UN, 2018b). Adhering to the ethos of the UN's sustaining peace and prevention agenda, efforts should concentrate on reducing the risk of disaster displacement and preventing protracted and multiple displacement.

A suite of specific initiatives offer a robust foundation for policy and programmatic action, including the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda (Nansen Initiative, 2015), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IASC, 2010) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement (UNDRR, 2019a). Progress is being made on disaster displacement across Asia-Pacific. Nevertheless, the specificities of responding to and managing protracted and multiple displacement are often missing from such initiatives, meaning that the conditions that lead to and maintain protracted and multiple displacement persist. To rectify this, we first need to understand the scale of the challenge. But the current evidence base is insufficient to gauge the extent of protracted and multiple disaster displacements, and the drivers and intersectionalities that generate displacement following a hazard.

Shining a spotlight on protracted and multiple disaster displacements challenges normative approaches to understanding and acting on disaster displacement risk: for example, that disaster displacement is a singular, temporary event, or that people always want to return to their original location, or that returning is feasible. It also encourages greater attention to displacement caused by slow-onset events, such as drought or sea-level rise, which in some contexts displace more people repeatedly and for longer periods (UNESCAP, 2019; WMO, 2020). And it highlights the more politically contentious aspects of unresolved displacement – where vulnerabilities are heightened and protection measures are acutely needed, such as for socially and politically excluded or marginalised groups, including undocumented migrants.[3] In each instance of disaster displacement, individuals' engagement with local, national and international agencies can vary significantly, affecting the likelihood of their being displaced again.

While it is important to understand the underlying risk drivers of natural hazard-related disaster displacement, as well as the factors influencing whether disaster displacement occurs multiple times and/or is protracted, it is also important to challenge common assumptions about vulnerability. It may well be that those 'left behind', unable to move before or during a hazardous event, are most at risk. Their needs and priorities are also important, in terms of resources, services and opportunities.

Preventing protracted and/or multiple disaster displacements requires a spectrum of actions, including contingency planning by national and sub-national NDMAs and humanitarian agencies, consideration of protection needs – particularly for hazard-related disasters in conflict contexts – and long-term developmental processes that are risk-informed and lay the foundations to secure and uphold basic human rights. Advancing understanding and political action on protracted and multiple disaster displacements thus provides an opportunity to devise aligned responses involving humanitarian, development and peace expertise. The commitment to support 'durable solutions' provides a means to do this, whereby 'internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked

3 People may experience continuous displacement for myriad reasons. For example, 'existing refugee populations often reside in climate "hotspots" where they are exposed to and affected by slow- and sudden-onset hazards, which can also result in secondary displacement' (WMO, 2020: 30).

to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement' (UN, 1998). Greater alignment between humanitarian and development actors is needed to help people achieve durable solutions and to reduce the risk of displacement becoming protracted or repeated.

## 1.1 About this paper

Despite evidence suggesting that displacement creates new opportunities for change, including 'socioeconomic and cultural transformation, and reconfigurations of power relations' (Holloway et al., 2019: 9), the overwhelming primary and secondary evidence points to the negative impact that protracted and multiple disaster displacement can have, including loss of life and livelihoods and sustained or heightened exposure and reduced capacity to manage new and emerging hazards, including climate-related threats. For this reason, we largely interpret disaster displacement events to be inherently negative (except in instances of planned evacuations and other disaster risk management actions).

This paper was intended to focus on measures to reduce the risk of and prevent protracted and multiple disaster displacement. However, evidence of good practice is limited in regard to preventing displacement from becoming multiple and/or protracted; instead, there tends to be a focus on disaster recovery and how to 'build back better' after disasters. The paper therefore considers why it is important to pay special attention to protracted and multiple disaster displacement, the underlying drivers of disaster displacement risk and measures to strengthen disaster risk governance to better manage that risk, and strengthen effective response to disaster displacement to achieve durable solutions.

This paper is intended for policy-makers and UN and operational agencies working in Asia-Pacific to reduce the risk of natural hazard-related disasters, address the impacts of such events and build people's resilience to ongoing or future hazards. It highlights the need for greater coordination and action by human rights commissions and other sectoral agencies, national statistics offices and financial/development planning officers to ensure a whole-of-government approach to managing disaster displacement to reduce the risk of disaster displacement becoming multiple and/or protracted.

Alongside an in-depth review of secondary literature, the paper draws on interviews in January–March 2020 with over 35 experts working across Asia-Pacific, including the UNDRR- and IOM-convened Disaster Displacement Working Group in Bangkok.

# 2 Definitions, a typology and data gaps

This chapter defines protracted and multiple displacement, outlines a typology and provides examples from across Asia-Pacific, and highlights the data gaps masking the scale of the challenge in the region.

## 2.1 Defining multiple and protracted disaster displacement

Disaster displacement refers to situations where 'people are forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard' (Nansen Initiative in UNDRR, 2019a: 59).[4]

This definition is useful but inherently problematic for many governments and operational agencies as it encapsulates the risk management action of planned evacuation – which many NDMAs strive to implement as such measures are proven to reduce disaster mortality (Goldschmidt et al., 2014). Thus, definitionally and in some data sets, disaster displacement will include, for example, mass evacuations within a 14 km radius of the Taal volcano in the Philippines in early 2020 (NDRRMC, 2020). This paper intentionally does not frame planned risk management actions as disaster displacement, but it does highlight instances where poorly planned evacuations and related actions do not result in effective return, settlement or relocation – and thus become a driving factor of protracted and/or multiple displacement.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UN, 1998), underpinned by aspects of international law, stress that displacement 'shall last no longer than required by the circumstances' (Principle 6), and that displacement 'shall not be carried out in a manner that violates the rights to life, dignity, liberty and security of those affected' (Principle 8). There is, however, little agreement on what constitutes 'protracted' disaster displacement, with varying timeframes, thresholds and definitions in operation.

Here we regard protracted displacement as situations where 'tangible progress towards durable solutions is slow or stalled for significant periods of time because IDPs [internally displaced persons] are prevented from taking or are unable to take steps that allow them to progressively reduce the vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization they face as displaced people, in order to regain a self-sufficient and dignified life and ultimately find a durable solution' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 20). For instance, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated that, one year after the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, up to 2.6 million people were still displaced, many of them living in temporary shelter (Swain, 2016; Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017). Although not a focus of this paper, in principle this definition should be extended to capture displacement across national borders.

Multiple disaster displacement refers to situations where people may be 'displaced multiple times for relatively short periods of time, returning to their place of origin when it is deemed safe, only to be displaced again months or years later' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 98). We extend this definition to include repeated displacement to new locations, for example where individuals living away from their place of origin relocate a second, third or more times. This may be due to subsequent disasters or other developmental or

4 For a fuller definition, see Annex 1.

political drivers. After the 2017 floods in Fulchhari Upazila, Bangladesh, for example, people who had no property or land were displaced multiple times (Khan, forthcoming).

Where there is broad agreement among operational agencies is that, at least in principle, the cessation of protracted and multiple displacements is marked by the achievement of sustained durable solutions. How such durable solutions can be achieved is still unclear.

## 2.2 A typology of multiple and protracted disaster displacement in Asia-Pacific

Protracted and multiple disaster displacements are a lived reality for thousands of people across Asia-Pacific. In 2018, 9.3 million new displacements were recorded in East Asia and the Pacific as a result of natural hazards, and 3.3 million were recorded in South Asia (IDMC, 2019). Analysis of Asia-Pacific disaster 'riskscapes' reveals that 'slow-onset disasters are contributing to a greater share of internal displacement and will play a larger role in the future' (UNESCAP, 2019: 47). Indeed, extensive disaster risk[5] – including drought, for instance in Afghanistan; sea-level rise affecting islands in the Pacific; extended rainy seasons resulting in flooding, as in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; and prolonged volcanic eruptions, for example Mount Sinabung in Indonesia, which has been erupting repeatedly since 2010 – produce uncertainties which are leading to prolonged and multiple disaster displacement (IDMC, 2019).

Despite the specific circumstances of each situation of displacement risk, a broad typology of multiple and protracted displacement events can be identified (see Figure 1). Multiple and protracted disaster displacements, and the barriers to securing return or integration, are multifaceted. Examples include:

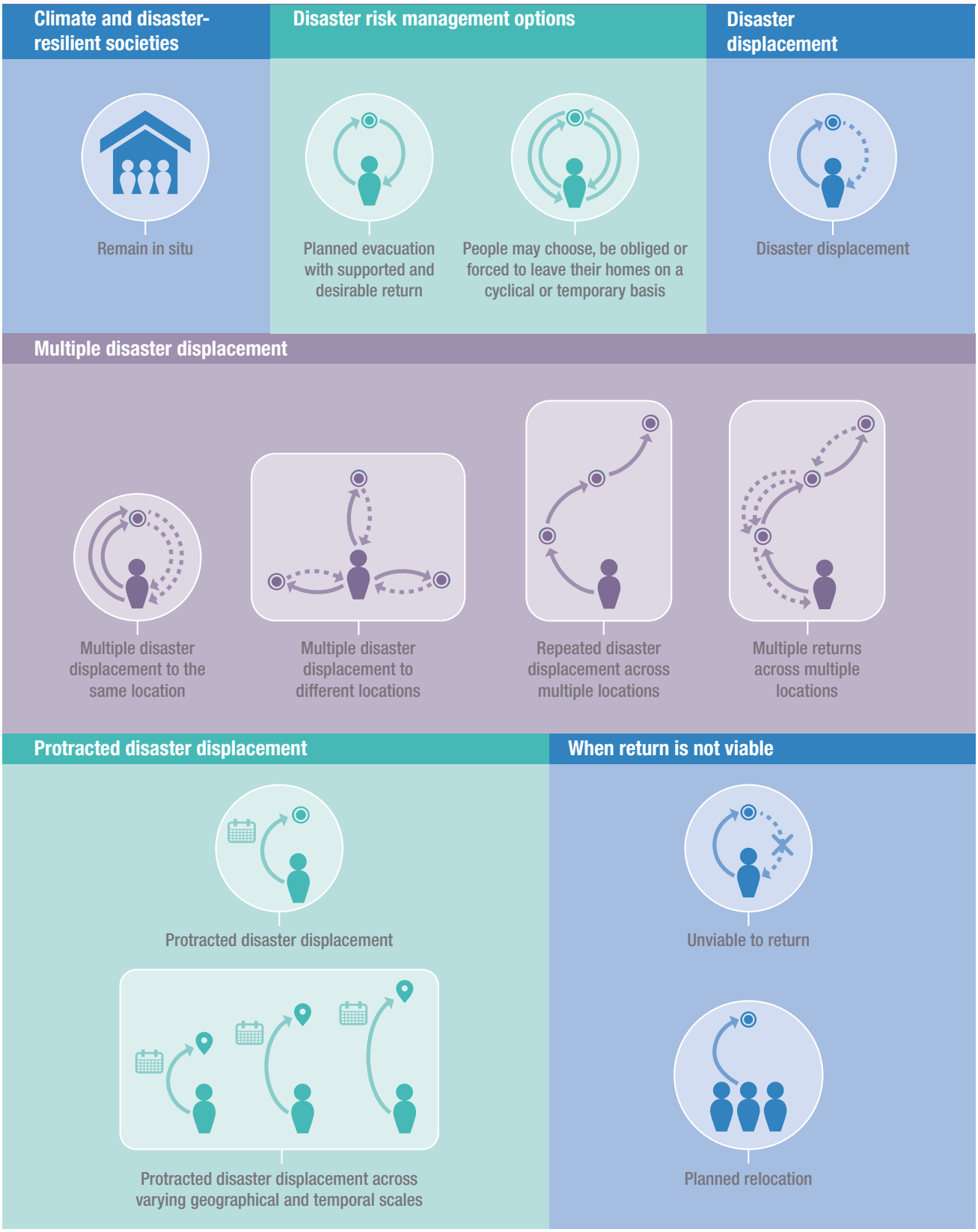
- **Practical and physical factors**, as in Bangladesh, where families exposed to riverbank erosion are forced to move further and further inland (in such contexts relocation to lesser-exposed areas is required – which is never a short-term prospect).
- **Political instability or issues related to land ownership**, as in many Pacific islands, where customary land ownership and limited public land complicate wholesale relocations in response to sea-level rise.
- **Legal and regulatory barriers**, including exclusion and no-build zones following a disaster. This was the case in post-tsunami Sri Lanka, following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and after the earthquake in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.
- **Failed relocation** can prompt people to move again in search of more secure livelihoods (an example of multiple displacement), or return to places of former residence, where they are at risk of fresh disaster displacement in the future. For instance, fishermen who were permanently relocated to a safer location away from the coast after Typhoon Haiyan returned to their former residence so that they could resume their livelihoods (Schofield et al., 2019; Thomas, 2015).
- **Changing seasonal movements**, as in Mongolia, where disaster losses and constrained livelihood options as a result of severe winter weather (the Dzud) increase the movement of people to Ulaanbaatar, with knock-on effects on urbanisation and air pollution.

## 2.3 Masking the scale of the challenge: data gaps

There is a critical need for more comprehensive longitudinal data about societal risk, specifically hazards, including climate-related hazards, exposure, capacity and vulnerabilities. Such data is required to ensure the design and implementation of government and operational agencies' policies and interventions account for differentiated needs and priorities, in order to be inclusive and help build resilience for all. Systematically collecting baseline information, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geography, and overlaying this with climate and disaster data,

5 For a definition of 'extensive risk', see the Annex.

**Figure 1 Manifestations of disaster displacement**




Note: The typology is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive.

would help governments understand who is most vulnerable and most exposed to shocks and stresses. Longitudinal data can reveal the impacts of disasters on people's well-being and longer-term development outcomes, and can be used to improve policies and practice (Diwakar et al., 2019; Lovell et al., 2019).

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix is widely regarded as an authoritative source of data on disaster displacement, but it is not operational in all countries and displacement contexts in Asia-Pacific. Another key data source is IDMC's Global Internal Displacement Database. However, records are limited to cases of 'new' displacement, and so cannot plug data gaps related to protracted displacement. Many operational agencies also point to a lack of foresight studies to support more proactive preventative measures to reduce future displacement risks.

According to IDMC (2019: 68), 'for more than half of the largest disasters recorded since 2008, displacement data was collected for less than a month'. As such, 'systematic data collection stops long before [IDPs] have achieved a durable solution' (IDMC, 2019: 68). Disaggregated data on disaster displacement risks is not systematically included in standard tools and assessments, such as Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments or Post Disaster Needs Assessments, and there is debate around what level of sub-categorisation is useful for understanding displacement risks, incidence and trends. For example, disaster-displaced individuals are often homogenously labelled as 'affected' people[6] by NDMAs and agencies, potentially masking intersectional considerations.[7]

Governments and agencies pursuing preventative measures for reducing the incidence of protracted and multiple disaster displacement first need to grapple with the limitations of data (see Box 1) and definitions. Even on a case-by-case basis, there doesn't seem to be much clarity about what return periods we should be aiming for, and what standards have been achieved. For example, operational agencies reported that it is often unclear whether displaced people have been able to secure safe housing, reliable livelihoods and access to the systems and services that could help them recover after a disaster and prevent them from being repeatedly displaced or for prolonged periods. Without a complete picture of disaster displacement impacts or longer-term systematic data collection, policies and interventions are unlikely to be able to manage changing needs, priorities and capacities and help individuals prevent, prepare for and recover from natural hazard-related disasters and strengthen their resilience to ongoing, recurring or future hazard events (IDMC, 2019; Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019).

Until these data gaps are addressed, governments and agencies should be more careful about how current displacement figures are used – and misused. The practice of citing high displacement figures to emphasise the scale of the challenge is problematic, particularly where data fails to differentiate between hazards, conflict or other drivers of disaster displacement, or includes planned evacuation and relocation. For example, operational agencies' experiences during Typhoon Haiyan reveal how disaster displacement figures in the millions, garnered from estimates of damaged housing, may be helpful for advocacy but do little to help programming, because they risk misinforming operational responses. In Lombok and Sulawesi in Indonesia, disaster displacement figures following the 2018 earthquake included families living within 100 metres of their homes and continuing with their daily routines, but fearful of returning to concrete structures in case of further earthquakes.[8] More nuanced articulations of the nature of displacement would thus better inform operational responses, and avoid unnecessarily distorting the picture of displacement in crisis situations.

6 For a definition of 'affected' people, see Annex 1.

7 This has already been seen in a number of sectors. For example, a global review has shown how insufficient data undermines planning of sexual and reproductive health services post-disaster and during prolonged crises (Casey, 2015).

8 Interview with an operational agency that is part of the Disaster Displacement Working Group in Bangkok.

### Box 1 Data gaps in disaster displacement risk

It is clear that multiple and protracted displacement warrant particular consideration, but operationally it is often difficult to know what to do and how to act. The reasons are dicussed below.

**Widespread gaps in disaster displacement data are masking a multitude of vulnerabilities and impacts.** For example, there is a lack of basic data on the nature of displacements in Asia-Pacific: how many are short-term, able to return to their homes with minimum disruption, versus longer-term and/or repeated. There is little data on whether protracted disaster displacement is internal or cross-border (Ponserre and Ginnetti, 2019); disaster impacts in conflict-affected contexts are known to be un- and under-reported (Peters, 2019); multiple disaster displacement can cumulatively erode individuals' coping capacities, but this goes largely unrecorded over a person's lifecourse; undocumented migrants or individuals who move without external support can be missing in disaster displacement statistics; and tracking of host communities outside geographical areas of operation of aid agencies and governments can be poor. Other issues include difficulties tracking the number of people displaced by slow-onset disasters (IDMC, 2019), and a failure 'to distinguish between forced and voluntary movements in the context of disasters' (Nansen Initiative, n.d.).

**Data coverage and availability varies substantially depending on the country**. There is a lack of sufficiently detailed data (and lack of capacity, technology, guidelines and tools) to count and account for disaster-displaced vulnerable groups – for instance pregnant women, children, youth, persons with disability and older people.

Building data collection infrastructures, databases and reporting mechanisms takes years. It will require strengthening the collection and analysis of overlapping data on displacement, well-being, climate and disasters, and the use of this data by NDMAs, specialised sectors (such as health, education and protection) and statistics departments.

# 3 Understanding the underlying risk drivers of disaster displacement

Of the multiple, complex and intersecting risk drivers that shape patterns of disaster displacement, here we focus on structural inequalities and issues of marginalisation, urban informality and crisis contexts.

## 3.1 Changing patterns of risk and structural inequalities

The incidence of protracted and multiple disaster displacement is testament to the fact that disaster risk management systems are not adapting rapidly enough to deal with the current Asia-Pacific 'riskscape', or the 'complex future of unpredictable multi-hazard risks' (UNESCAP, 2019: 2). The underlying drivers of displacement risk are not just changing hazard profiles. Even well-intentioned disaster risk management actions can inadvertently prolong disaster displacement if not effectively managed, such as the designation of exclusion zones (Klein, 2007) or the unintentional reinforcement of structural inequalities that lead to differentiated displacement experiences. What begins as planned, reluctant or forced evacuation can deteriorate into repeated and/or protracted disaster displacements, wherein individuals are 'prevented from taking or are unable to take steps for significant periods of time to progressively reduce their vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization and find a durable solution' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 4).

For decision-makers, understanding the underlying risk drivers of disaster displacement can seem unmanageable. Such drivers can include 'poverty and inequality, climate change and variability, unplanned and rapid urbanization and the lack of disaster risk considerations in land management and environmental and natural resource management, as well as compounding factors such as demographic change, non disaster risk-informed policies, the lack of regulations and incentives for private disaster risk reduction investment, complex supply chains, the limited availability of technology, unsustainable uses of natural resources, declining ecosystems, pandemics and epidemics' (UNISDR, 2016: 24).

Structural inequalities within a society will often mean that some people face prolonged displacement or multiple displacements after a disaster, while others do not. Different social, economic, cultural, political and environmental factors influence exclusion, discrimination and vulnerability (Lovell et al., 2019). Marginalised groups warrant specific attention; women and children comprise the majority of the world's current displaced population (Alam et al., 2015). Other sub-groups include young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, stateless or undocumented persons, IDPs, ethnic and caste groups, indigenous people, LGBTQIA[9] and the most impoverished, who are often disproportionately affected by natural hazards and climate change, as with other societal

9 LGBTQIA refers to: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual or allied.

challenges such as conflict and state fragility. Yet these groups are not homogenous, and different factors or inequalities intersect (such as gender, race, age, socio-economic status, geography, caste and disability) to influence people's capacity to prepare for, cope with and respond to natural hazard-related disasters, and their likelihood of being displaced (once, multiple times or in a protracted context) (Lovell et al., 2019; Holloway et al., 2019).

Understanding underlying social and economic inequalities, existing power dynamics and who the most marginalised are is critical in identifying who is most likely to be displaced after a disaster, and who needs to be targeted to prevent disaster displacement happening or becoming multiple or protracted. Vulnerability and displacement data gaps aside, the political will to act to prevent protracted and/or multiple disaster displacements is not always present – particularly where the displaced are members of politically or socially excluded groups.[10]

Inequalities within society lead to inequalities in displacement. Research on disaster displacement shows that people with financial resources and strong social or political connections and/or the dominant social group are often able to return more quickly after an event. In contrast, the poor and marginalised are often trapped in poverty, without the financial resources and livelihood opportunities, social protection mechanisms or access to systems and services to achieve durable solutions (IDMC, 2019; Twigg et al., 2017).

Marginalised groups are often excluded from the decisions that affect their everyday lives (Diwakar et al., 2019, Lovell et al., 2019; IFRC, 2018), and from accessing services and systems, such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and education, which are central to their well-being and development outcomes. During disasters and following disaster displacement, their exclusion from these systems, services and governance structures is often exacerbated, increasing the likelihood of their displacement from disasters becoming protracted or repeated.

## 3.2 Urban informality and crisis contexts

In Asia, 'internal displacement is increasingly a protracted and urban phenomenon' (IDMC, 2019: iv). In 2018, Asia had the highest number of people living in urban areas (2.3 billion), and by 2050 this figure is projected to have reached 3.5 billion (UNDESA, 2019). Urban contexts are complex, with movement driven by a myriad of factors, of which displacement may be only one. While people displaced by hazards are not necessarily the most vulnerable groups in urban settings, there is sufficient evidence that, in many contexts, disaster displaced arrivals are often forced to live in informal, temporary settlements, in unsafe housing which does not comply with building regulations, and with insecure land tenure and land title and limited access to essential basic services and systems (Schofield et al., 2019; Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2017; Siddiqi et al., 2019). This will influence people's subsequent vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards, and their likelihood of being displaced during a hazardous event. This is a major challenge for municipal authorities in terms of providing affordable, safe housing and basic services before, during and post-disaster, and for developing strategies that avoid multiple or protracted disaster displacement (IDMC, 2019).

After the 2015 Nepal earthquake, conditional cash grants for owner-driven reconstruction formed a major part of the government's recovery strategy, and these were distributed in tranches based on compliance with the grant's conditions. However, 'housing recovery has been slow due to the shortfall in the government grant, householders' lack of access to relevant, timely information and affordable materials for construction, together with mounting debts and complications relating to land tenure' (Schofield et al., 2019: 91). As of January 2020, almost five years on, 30% of those enrolled are yet to receive the third and final tranche of the housing grant (World Bank, 2020).

Where disaster risk governance systems and capacities are already low, as in conflict, post-conflict and fragile contexts, intersecting hazard

10 An example from Lebanon includes displaced populations from Palestine and more recently Syria (Peters et al., 2019).

and conflict drivers of disaster displacement can be particularly acute (Peters, 2019; UNDRR, 2019b). In fragile urban settings, consequences can include accelerated unplanned urbanisation, 'further aggravating inequalities, and generating further risk of displacement and instability' (IDMC, 2019: iv). Urban centres and peri-urban areas have become hotspots for conflict and disaster risk, and a destination for people who have been forcibly displaced. However, it is unclear 'the extent to which cities provide safe haven for the people who flee there, or the degree to which the displaced are able to integrate and establish new urban lives' (IDMC, 2018: 2). Furthermore, it has been suggested that 'unsustainable increases in urban population density also heighten the risk of communal conflict and criminal violence' (ibid: 3).

The links between urban informality, hazards and conflict are increasingly pertinent to understanding trends in disaster displacement. It has been well documented that conflict exacerbates vulnerability and exposure to disaster risk and reduces coping capacity by eroding social capital and assets and disrupting basic services (Peters et al., 2019c; Keen, 1994; Harris et al., 2013). Yet how protection mechanisms and disaster risk management measures are pursued in contexts where natural hazard-related disaster risk and conflict collide remains relatively unexplored (Peters, 2018).

Conflicts in Asia-Pacific are largely sub-national. Since 1946, over 131 million people have been affected by such conflicts (Parks et al., 2013), largely in 'stable, middle-income countries, with relatively strong governments, regular elections, and capable security forces; where state legitimacy, rather than capacity, may be the source of contestation' (ibid: 11). Social and violent conflict can drive patterns of displacement that intersect with displacement caused by natural hazard-related disasters.

Examples of the complex intersection of disasters and conflict include the situation in Cox's Bazar, where conflict-displaced Rohingya forced from Myanmar are highly exposed to the risk of flooding in and around camps in Bangladesh (Paul et al., 2018). In protracted crises such as Afghanistan, decades of conflict have undermined irrigation systems and agricultural extension services, exacerbating the impact of drought (Peters et al., 2019c). There is evidence of a surge in recruitment to armed groups following droughts between 2006 and 2008 (UNESCAP, 2018).

Conflict presents a major barrier to enacting disaster risk management (DRM) measures. For example, in Timor-Leste 'efforts to promote disaster preparedness are complicated by a history of conflict-related internal displacement and longstanding issues over land and property rights' (Peters et al., 2019c: 15). With current data suggesting that '55% of climate-related disaster deaths in Asia between 1997 and 2016 took place in the region's four most fragile countries' (Peters et al., 2019c: 7), and Asia-Pacific set to move from 'high' to 'severe' vulnerability by 2030, understanding and action on the intersection of displacement, disasters, conflict, climate and urban informality has never been more urgent.

## 3.3 A matter of rights

Displacement (and disasters) cannot be fully understood through a technocratic risk management perspective: multiple and protracted disaster displacement risk is an inherently social and political process involving choices and constraints, and experienced by people in vastly different ways. Although all displacement arguably involves some element of agency, individuals largely do not 'choose' to be displaced. A more accurate way of looking at this may be to characterise displacement as the product of a lack of alternative options (Kälin, 2013).

Protracted and multiple disaster displacement can trigger or exacerbate rights violations (UN, 2019). A well-established body of evidence makes clear the detrimental immediate and long-term impacts of disaster displacement on people's livelihoods and well-being, including loss of earnings, declining water and food security, disrupted schooling, restricted access to protection and healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, the entrenchment of poverty and strained social relationships (UNDRR, 2019a; Holloway et al., 2019; Pacific Community, 2016). Too often, disaster displacement can result in unmet needs and abuses of human rights, and can exacerbate

gender-based violence and other pre-existing inequalities and discrimination (IFRC, 2016; Metha, 2007). At particular risk are women, children, youth and older persons, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

In many contexts across Asia-Pacific, highly effective evacuation and response operations have helped reduce loss of life in hazardous events, but there are still critical areas of concern, including: the absence of basic protection systems can exacerbate gender-based violence in post-disaster situations, particularly in natural hazard-related disasters in conflict contexts (Peters, 2019); the need to systematically uphold human rights in transition periods from recovery to the new 'normal', be this resettlement, reintegration or integration elsewhere; and ensuring affected populations are engaged in decision-making around when durable solutions are deemed to have been achieved – including monitoring processes to determine that people aren't unnecessarily exposed to future hazard risk.

# 4 Dealing with displacement risk: within and beyond disaster risk management

Progress on DRM in Asia-Pacific has helped people to stay in situ in disaster situations by reducing people's exposure and vulnerability, and enhancing capacities to prevent, prepare for and respond to hazardous events. Pursuing the broad policy objectives of DRR thus remains relevant, and is expected to reduce the incidence of displacement over time, with the important exception of parts of Asia-Pacific, where climate change presents an existential threat. Here, preventing disaster displacement will necessarily involve actions far beyond the region – in the form of significant emissions reductions globally – and will likely involve permanent planned relocations.

For much of Asia, action to prevent disaster displacement will not only require continuing existing DRM efforts, but also a radical acceleration of those efforts to match the region's changing 'riskscapes' – which are surpassing current DRM trajectories (UNESCAP, 2019). Business as usual approaches will not be sufficient to address current and future displacement risk, and a concerted upscaling of political commitment and tangible action will be needed. Below we discuss some of the key areas to be addressed related to policy, drawing on the primary research conducted for this study.

Laws and responsibilities at the national level exist that govern evacuations, and NDMAs and other actors will often support evacuation planning and delivery. Recent examples include more than 2 million people evacuated in China due to Typhoon Lekima (August 2019), and the equivalent number in Bangladesh due to Cyclone Bylbul (November 2019) (WMO, 2020: 30). However, few national governments in Asia-Pacific have a multi-sectoral plan to prevent, prepare for and manage disaster displacement. Rare examples include Vanuatu's national policy on climate change and disaster-induced displacement (Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office, 2018) and Bangladesh's national strategy on the management of disaster- and climate-induced internal displacement (Siddiqui et al., 2015). Plans are often very aspirational, and often do not give special consideration to multiple or protracted disaster displacement.

Key informants from the primary research repeatedly stressed that internationally agreed guiding principles on internally displaced persons are yet to be systematically adhered to or achieved in hazard-prone contexts. Such principles are not fully operationalised and increased awareness-raising, capacity-building and accountability within the disaster community are all needed to translate the principles into action. This includes for example systematic integration of displacement risk in climate adaptation and disaster planning tools – as part of a broader ambition to better integrate climate change adaptation and DRM (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2017).

There was also no clear consensus on whether protracted and multiple disaster displacements are evidence of failed DRM, and whether

preventing protracted and multiple disaster displacement requires 'doing good DRM' or something different. It is well recognised that disaster impacts reflect a failure to adequately and systematically take multiple hazards or cascading effects into account, and that disaster displacement is in part a manifestation of development decisions that are not adequately risk-informed (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019; UNDRR, 2019b). Protracted displacement witnessed following the Indian Ocean tsunami, Typhoon Haiyan and Typhoon Nargis, or multiple disaster displacements as seen following Typhoon Nargis, are a stark reminder of the inadequacies of current efforts to reduce the risk of and prevent disaster displacement, and response efforts to help people find durable and lasting solutions to disaster displacement.

Ideally, measures to prevent disaster displacement should be taken well before a hazardous event. In practice, the impetus to deal with displacement risk is still largely a feature of the post-disaster space. The transition from recovery to mitigation and preparedness is still a weak link in the disaster management cycle. It is also the point at which individuals may find themselves straddling – or falling through the cracks of – humanitarian and developmental interventions. While there is a focus on building back in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction after disasters (Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework (UNISDR, 2015)), often this is aspirational and households build back themselves, usually with limited financial resources, materials or technical assistance; essentially, they 'self-recover' (Twigg et al., 2017; Schofield et al., 2019). Lessons from post-tsunami shelter reconstruction in Aceh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka show how the term 'better' is imbued with multiple meanings and subject to multiple interpretations (Kennedy et al., 2008) and competing visions of post-disaster development trajectories. Others highlight the prioritisation of commercial opportunities at the expense of local communities (Klein, 2007).

Despite progress across Asia-Pacific in recognising the possibility and impacts of disaster displacement – including in the Ulaanbaatar Declaration (Government of Mongolia and UNDRR AP, 2018), the Action Plan 2018–2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (UNDRR AP, 2018) and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) (Pacific Community, 2016)[11] – consideration of displacement in legal and policy frameworks for DRM are far from comprehensive or systematically enforced. In contrast, the government of Bangladesh has adopted a pragmatic policy response through the National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (Siddiqui et al., 2015). The policy outlines the importance of shifting from a traditional response-focused approach, to a more proactive comprehensive approach which embodies rights-based perspectives (ibid.). The policy still has some way to go to adequately deal with how to prevent protracted or multiple displacements, but it does stress that 'displacement needs to be addressed to avoid protracted situations through durable solutions – return, local integration and relocation/resettlement' (ibid: 21).

Many policies remain largely response-driven and do not deal with the causes of disaster displacement, particularly multiple and protracted disaster displacement. Part of the challenge is that those causes lie beyond the remit of NDMAs and can be highly political (see above), such as housing, land and property rights and discrimination of socially excluded groups. Solutions to the challenge of protracted and multiple disaster displacement risk lie both with and beyond NDMAs, and require whole-of-government approaches including, where relevant, human rights commissions.

11 Including but not limited to national and sub-national DRR strategy development related to the Sendai Framework Target E implementation period from 2015–2020 (UNISDR, 2015).

# 5 Recommendations for reducing the risk of protracted and multiple disaster displacement

Pursuing DRM actions in ways cognisant of protracted and multiple disaster displacement risk would go a long way towards reducing such displacement, the logic being that DRR plays a critical role in reducing people's exposure and vulnerability and building their resilience, thereby reducing the risk of displacement by natural hazards and climate change (UNDRR, 2019a). UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement highlights numerous ways to understand, plan, prepare for and respond to disaster displacement, aligned to the Sendai Framework priorities for action (see Figure 2).[12]

Our recommendations are an extension of those efforts, with action required by those national bodies principally responsible for reducing disaster risk. This includes utilising Sendai Framework Target E to embed protracted and multiple displacement risk considerations into DRR strategies, and specific measures by NDMAs to integrate displacement risk across the risk management cycle. Displacement risk reduction actions will also be required by a whole range of government departments and agencies. We thus also recommend action by human rights commissions, social protection mechanisms and sector specialists.

Below are a set of priority actions to develop the evidence base around what works, and lay the policy and operational foundations for reducing displacement risk. Emphasis is placed on the inequalities which produce multiple and protracted displacement, although we recognise the need for action in combination with structural measures, such as infrastructure, to tackle the physical elements of hazards, climate variability and climate change.

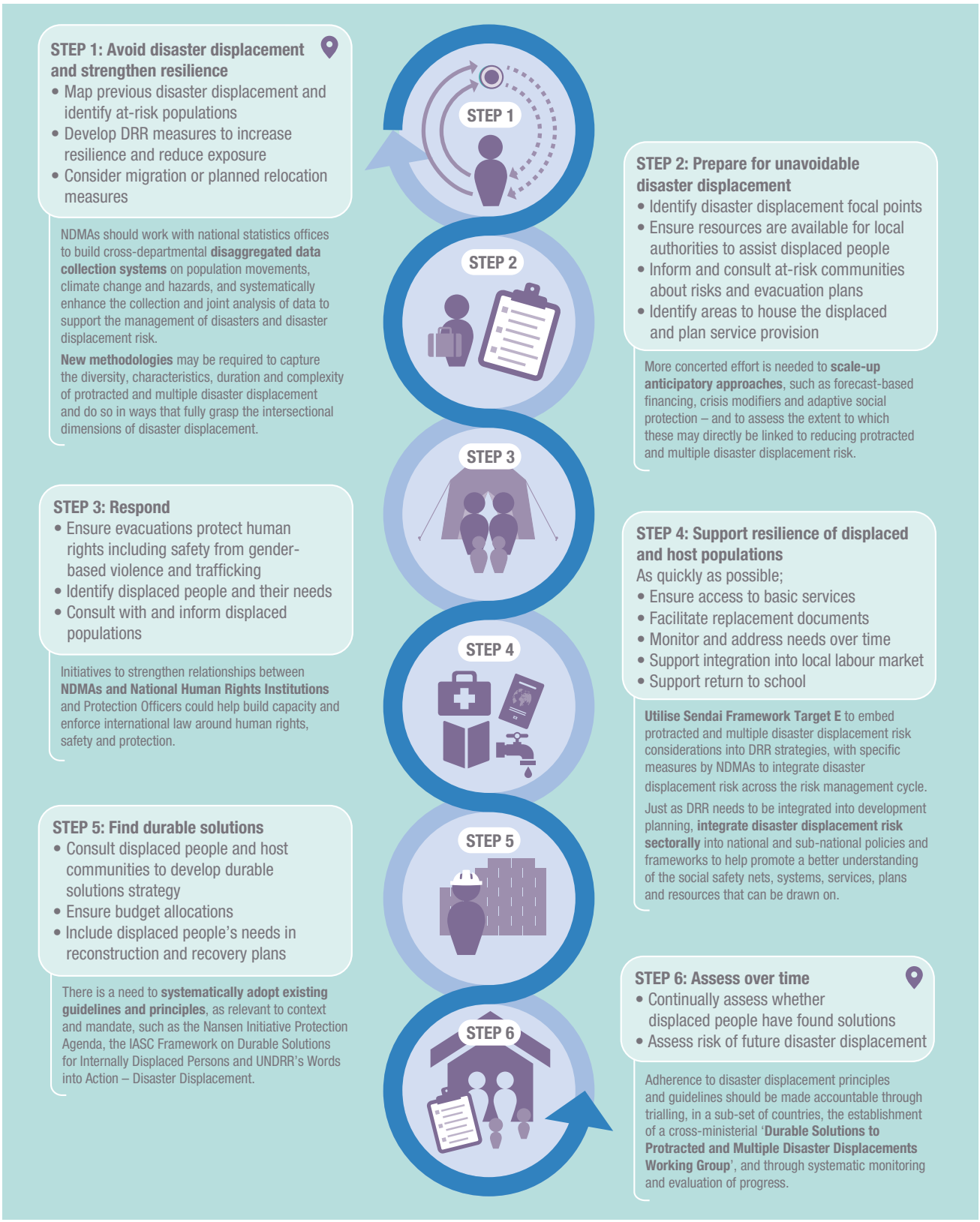
## Recommendation 1: Systematically adopt existing guidelines and principles

### Employ existing guidelines, principles and initiatives

The Sendai Framework states that, to achieve Priority 3 (30, I), national and local governments should 'encourage the adoption of policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities, in accordance with national laws and circumstances' (UNISDR, 2015: 19). Therefore, to achieve

12 The paper outlines how to address the Sendai Framework's priorities for action, including: Priority 1: Understanding disaster displacement risk; Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster displacement risk; Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience to reduce displacement risk; and Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response to disaster displacement and to 'build back better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction to achieve durable solutions.

**Figure 2 Prioritising protracted and multiple disaster displacement**




Source: Adapted from Norwegian Refugee Council (2019) in UNDRR (2019a).

this, our principal recommendation is that governments and agencies should systematically adopt, as relevant to their context and mandate, the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda (Nansen Initiative, 2015), the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IASC, 2010) and UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement (UNDRR, 2019a). Each initiative provides guidance on how to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience in relation to disaster displacement. Although these initiatives do not always specify protracted and multiple displacement scenarios, they provide important foundations for tackling displacement risk more generally.

Knowing that these initiatives exist and yet action is lagging, action research is needed to understand the extent of uptake, and the barriers to adoption and implementation, of each set of guidelines, particularly in urban and crisis settings. Accompaniment could help here, whereby governments are supported to understand and apply principles in their context, and how this translates into responsibility and accountability for different government departments.

Existing regional networks could serve as useful entry points for such accompaniment processes, including the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)'s Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, which provides support to countries in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and small island developing states (SIDS) in the Southwestern Pacific, with a focus on end-to-end early warning for coastal hazards (UNESCAP, 2017); or the newly ratified intergovernmental Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), which could help governments in articulating displacement prevention commitments and integrating them into the reporting mechanisms for the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework (UNDRR AP, 2018) and the Ulaanbaatar Declaration (Government of Mongolia and UNDRR AP, 2018).

Non-state actors' alignment to the guidelines and principles could be encouraged and tracked through the Asia Pacific Disaster Displacement Working Group. State and non-state progress should be showcased through regional and global convening spaces on disasters and climate change, including the APMCDRR, COP26 and the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC).

### Utilise Target E and include displacement risks in DRR strategies and plans

The normative assumption is that attaining the Sendai Framework and accompanying guidelines would go some way towards reducing the risk of displacement, and in turn protracted and multiple disaster displacement. UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement offers guidance to governments on how to integrate issues of disaster displacement into local and regional DRR strategies (UNDRR, 2019a), the rationale being that 'DRR measures that are well designed and implemented have a significant role to play in reducing and avoiding disaster displacement and human suffering' (ibid: 21).

Successful examples of integrating consideration of protracted and multiple disaster displacements into national and sub-national strategies, and implementation and financing plans should be highlighted with ministerial and technical delegations at the APMCDRR, and then taken forward to the subsequent Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction. Technical assistance by UNDRR and regional specialists should concentrate on supporting sub-national DRR design and implementation in protracted and multiple disaster displacement hotspots, including in fragile settings affected by violence and conflict.

For many Pacific Island communities, proactive management of disaster displacement risk is inherently transboundary. Coherence should be sought between efforts to advance the prevention and management of displacement risk at the regional level with sub-national DRR strategies. For example, efforts to identify a broad set of policy options to adapt to climate change impacts in the Pacific, including through the Pacific regional component of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, Nationally Determined Contributions, Adaptation Communications and National Adaptation Plans, and FRDP, should align with efforts to create and update sub-national DRR strategies under Target E (UNISDR, 2015; Daze et al., 2019).

In highly exposed SIDS, prevention of disaster displacement will not be enough, and human mobility will be necessary and will need to be supported adequately. This could entail exploring how 'existing national migration-related laws and regulations may allow for voluntary adaptive international migration of a temporary nature' (Burson and Bedford, 2013). As the FRDP (Pacific Community, 2016: 3) notes, addressing human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change is one aspect of the inter-related goals of 'strengthened integrated adaptation and risk reduction to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters' and 'strengthened disaster preparedness, response and recovery'.

Finally, as part of a longer-term process of regional policy change, protracted and multiple disaster displacement risk must be included in the ASEAN Vision on Disaster Management – beyond the current 2025 version (ASEAN, 2016a). With just one reference to displacement in the Vision 2025 and accompanying work programme (ASEAN, 2016b), regional commitments through other forums need to be systematically reflected in such documents to pave the way for a more coherent policy on displacement risk. A similar commitment to explore the specificities of protracted and multiple displacement risk should be incorporated into the next iteration of the Platform on Disaster Displacement strategy beyond 2019–2022 (PDD, n.d.).

## Recommendation 2: Bridge data gaps and enhance evidence on disaster displacement

### Bridge data gaps and improve interoperability

National capacity-building is required to enhance and systematise disaggregated data collection (by sex, age, economic status, disability, ethnicity and geography) as a baseline, and the interoperability of existing panel datasets with climate and disaster datasets. Over time, this will help in analysing trends in protracted and multiple disaster displacement.

Data needs to be collected in a way that allows for the identification of trends and emerging problems in specific instances of disaster displacement. This is unlikely to happen through a multitude of agency-specific initiatives, and donors should thus avoid perpetuating the fragmentation of data collection. Instead, in the long term, this will require systematic and sustained data collection embedded within government systems, alongside capacity-building and training to better understand the feasibility of merging data and the potential for interoperability. This is a long-term ambition that will take a number of years to achieve, if not decades – as experience from the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) since 2004 demonstrates.[13] Building on the lessons of the DTM, expansion to a wider geographical range would be valuable, conditional on capacity-building for relevant government departments to enhance national systems for displacement tracking. Alongside enhanced monitoring capabilities, the accountability aspects of initiatives like the DTM provide a means to log 'complaints in assistance and perceptions on responsiveness to identified needs' (DTM, n.d.). New initiatives should seek to bridge the gap in evidence on disaster displacement in fragile contexts, helping to reveal more about the lived realities, experiences and double vulnerabilities of linked hazard and conflict risk (Peters, 2019).

There is also a related need to improve links between data collection in humanitarian and development settings, a long-recognised challenge that still requires redress (UNGA, 2016). For example, in the 2013 eruption of Mount Sinabung in Indonesia data on the provision of maternal reproductive health services reported through health information systems was insufficient to quantify the need for care or design and evaluate interventions which effectively straddle 'normal' and emergency situations (Sajow et al., 2020). While global initiatives such as the Global Risk Assessment Framework (GRAF) are seeking to harmonise

13 Information on the DTM can be found at https://dtm.iom.int/about.

data sets, in the meantime donors should demand that any initiatives involving disaster displacement data collection include minimum standards for interoperability or provide a rationale for not doing so, for example where ethical or security concerns prevent the sharing of such data.[14]

Finally, UN and operational agencies should seek to set an example by being clearer about data, methodologies and classifications, to avoid the perpetuation of unelaborated statistics that do little to expose the complexities of protracted and multiple disaster displacement trends. Agencies can help set standards for data collection and analysis around protracted and multiple disaster displacement, and should support governments in how to operationalise and monitor these at different scales.

## Address evidence gaps

Concerted efforts need to be made to document and share best practice specifically in addressing the structural inequalities that increase exposure and vulnerability to hazards and contribute to the root causes of protracted and multiple disaster displacement. Doing so could help spur a much-needed shift to embed consideration of disaster displacement risk across the entire risk management cycle, and particularly prevention and mitigation. Establishing an evidence base specifically on protracted and multiple disaster displacement would also provide governments and operational agencies with a reference point from which to address known deficiencies, including preparedness for disaster displacement; securing viable livelihoods as part of a durable solution; offering at-risk or affected populations a suite of relocation and integration options; and accountability mechanisms for securing and sustaining durable solutions to disaster displacement.

Where research has focused explicitly on addressing evidence gaps, for example in relation to crises combining disaster and conflict risk, insights have been provided about the novel and unexpected ways DRM actions can support peace (Peters et al., 2019b). This was the case in Afghanistan, where conflict analysis tools are integrated into DRR project designs in the Afghanistan Resilience Consortium. Here, reforestation projects are utilising conflict resolution and management committees to achieve joint disaster reduction and peace outcomes (Mena et al., 2019).

New methodologies may be required to capture the diversity, characteristics, duration and complexity of protracted and multiple disaster displacement – and to do so in ways that fully grasp the intersectional dimensions of displacement, the conditions that led to displacement and the obstacles preventing durable solutions.[15] Examples include longitudinal studies and life histories to collect data on protracted and/or multiple disaster displacement, allowing for a more complete understanding of an individual's experiences over their life course (see Diwakar et al., 2019), or studies tracing the movement of individuals and groups across several geographies (see Jaspars and Buchanan-Smith, 2018). Research of this kind would be best undertaken by institutes with proven methodological, analytical and technical competencies, in collaboration with relevant government agencies to encourage ownership of the findings and responsibility to address the displacement challenges identified by the research. Priority should be given to contexts of urban informality and conflict (IDMC, 2018; Peters, 2019a).

There is also a growing demand for 'models and tools to estimate the potential scale and severity of future displacement', to inform policy development and investment planning. Efforts are also under way to strengthen the technical capacity to undertake such modelling, which is currently limited (Ponserre

14 Information on the GRAF can be found at www.preventionweb.net/disaster-risk/graf.

15 Evidence is also required for specific groups. For example, research on gender roles in displacement focuses mainly on women, 'with less attention paid to masculinities and diverse gender identities, and on sexual and gender-based violence, to the detriment of a wider consideration of women's livelihoods and agency. Women are either equated with vulnerability and victimhood, or portrayed as capable of remarkable resilience and agency, leaving little room for complexity or the multiple factors that condition their lives' (Holloway et al., 2019: 9).

and Ginnetti, 2018: 45). Mobile phone-based household surveys that allow for continued data collection with people on the move are one relatively low-cost method, and have proved useful in tracking quantitative and qualitative measures of disaster resilience in Myanmar (see Jones, 2018). Capturing subjective measures – which could similarly be applied to experiences of disaster displacement – helps challenge traditional top-down, expert-driven measures of disaster resilience. If scaled up and successful, such methods 'may offer quicker, cheaper and more bottom-up ways of understanding and measuring resilience in post-disaster contexts' (Jones, 2018).

## Recommendation 3: Integrate disaster displacement risk across the disaster risk management cycle

Including disaster displacement risk across the DRM cycle will help ensure that, before, during and after a disaster, there are institutional systems in place with cross-sectoral accountability to ensure non-discriminatory access to services to support people's well-being, prevent disaster displacement and achieve durable solutions. In some regions this is already happening. For instance, the FRDP outlines the need for national and subnational governments and administrations in the Pacific to '[a]nticipate and prepare for future displacement by integrating human mobility issues within disaster preparedness, response and recovery programmes and actions' (Pacific Community, 2016: 23). Here we do not cover the full DRM cycle, but touch on aspects of pre- and post-disaster action.

### Action in the pre-disaster space

Actions to reduce disaster displacement risk and prevent protracted and multiple disaster displacement need to be integrated across the DRM cycle (see Figure 2). Doing so, it is anticipated, may help reduce the likelihood of a crisis ensuing, and lower the humanitarian caseload (UNFPA, 2015: 105). For example, disaster displacement risk must become a routine component of all preparedness activities, prioritising sub-national contexts in which there is a history of cyclical displacements affecting the same populations and already-displaced communities living in highly exposed locations. For instance, Vanuatu's National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-induced Displacement includes 'integrating human mobility into development planning across Government', and outlines plans to manage and prepare for displacement and migration and 'support social-cultural continuity in new locations' (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2015: 44).[16] Local-level contingency planning for disaster displacement risk is another example. For instance, 'Nepal's 2013 National Disaster Response Framework includes the preparation and preservation of open spaces for use in the event of a disaster to provide safe shelter for displaced people, a practice known as land banking. These spaces were used during the government's response to the 2015 earthquakes' (IOM DRR Strategy, in UNDRR, 2019a).

### Action in the post-disaster space

In reality across Asia-Pacific, the operational starting-point for dealing with protracted and multiple displacement is post-disaster and humanitarian response. Given this, governments and agencies need to support recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction in ways that actively seek to prevent displacement becoming protracted, or that lead to repeated displacements (see Box 2 for specific actions).

Examples of such actions include the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners pursuing preparedness measures ahead of the upcoming monsoon in areas of Kutupalong, where Rohingya refugees reside. After floods, landslides and strong winds hit camps in 2019, preparations for the monsoon were stepped up, including infrastructure measures such as improved drainage, roads and bridges (WMO, 2020: 30).

16 This includes mapping 'family histories, birth records, connections to land, and property and assets ownership to provide records in the event of displacement', and improving 'birth registration to ensure personal identification documentation is protected in the event of displacement' (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2015: 44).

**Box 2 Reducing the risk of displacement becoming multiple/protracted and supporting durable solutions**

- Begin employment and livelihood programmes as soon as possible to avoid aid dependency and the erosion of displaced people's resilience, and to prevent displacement becoming protracted. Such programmes should be adapted to each location to meet both immediate and longer-term needs.
- Ensure that assistance programmes and mechanisms cover the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups, including older people, women, children and young people, single-headed households, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, migrants, people previously displaced and other marginalised groups.
- Ensure assistance and distribution mechanisms do not exclude displaced people without documents such as passports, identity cards, birth and marriage certificates, property deeds and academic certificates, which may have been left behind, lost or destroyed.
- Provide targeted assistance for displaced people outside camps, their host families and wider displacement-affected communities. Such assistance should recognise that hosting displaced people may create additional humanitarian needs, and that it can help ease potential tensions between displaced people and their hosts.
- Closely coordinate emergency relief with rehabilitation and development programming to ensure that it contributes as much as possible to strengthening displaced people's resilience. Food for work programmes, for example, might be linked to longer-term livelihood development programmes based on market analyses.

Source: UNDRR, 2019a: 48.

It is important to recognise that marginalised groups, including single parents, older persons, people with disabilities, ethnic or indigenous groups and households separated from their community may require additional support in accessing assistance and achieving a durable solution (UNDRR, 2019a). This reflects the need for governments and operational agencies to work with and harness the expertise, capacities and experience of locally led actors and affected households, who can help design and deliver locally appropriate solutions that respond to local needs and contexts (Barbelet, 2018; UN, 2016b; Lovell et al., 2019). This is in line with the ambition to invest in local humanitarian action, partnerships and capacity-building in order to enable humanitarian action, emergency preparedness and response to be 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (UN, 2016b; Barbelet, 2018; Christian Aid et al.,2019; Wake and Barbelet, 2019). Although not without challenges, support for localisation is reflected in the actions of many governments in Asia, including placing limits on access for INGOs 'while encouraging (or requiring) them to work with local organisations', as has been seen in Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh (Wake and Barbelet, 2019: 1).

## Beyond the prevention of disaster displacement

Planned relocation or voluntary migration may be an adaptation option in a transition to a 1.5 °C warmer world (IPCC, 2018), and may need to be part of the conversation on how to tackle protracted and multiple displacement risk (see Box 3). For example, in the high-mountain community of Ghulkin in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, increasing risk of glacial lake outburst flood prompted a village to relocate. This involved identifying and relocating to a new site following a consultative and participatory process which included hazard assessment and mapping, land-use planning, the construction of access roads and the provision of basic services (UNDRR, 2019a).

Changing hazard profiles related to climate variability and change are rendering some locales

**Box 3 Planned relocation and voluntary migration**

UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement identifies a number of recommendations for supporting planned relocation and voluntary migration.

- The analysis of high-risk areas to determine whether DRR measures to reduce exposure and vulnerability and avoid displacement are feasible, or whether to facilitate evacuation or planned relocation.
- The identification of areas suitable for relocation using land-use planning, rural development management tools, urban development plans and environmental degradation assessments.
- The development of programmes to support voluntary migration from areas facing disaster risk, including environmental change and degradation, slow-onset hazards or frequent small-scale hazards. Migration to build resilience and reduce disaster displacement risk might be short-term, circular, seasonal or permanent, and might be internal or cross-border.
- Provisions to undertake planned relocation as a last resort to move particularly vulnerable communities to a safe location with necessary basic services – including infrastructure, healthcare and education – safe housing, support to re-establish livelihoods and transport. Any such process should be consultative, rights-based and should engage all affected communities.

Source: UNDRR, 2019a: 41.

unviable for habitation. This is particularly the case for low-lying Pacific Islands. In Fiji, for example, in what is regarded as one of the 'first pre-emptive community relocations due to climate change', the village of Vunidogoloa moved 2 km inland following salt water intrusion into community gardens due to high tide and heavy rain, despite the presence of seawalls (Al Jazeera, 2018, in IFRC, 2018).

## Recommendation 4: Enhance inclusive policies and social safety nets to reduce risk

### Anticipatory finance and safety nets

The Sendai Framework states that, to achieve Priority 3, national and local governments should 'strengthen the design and implementation of inclusive policies and social safety-net mechanisms, including through community involvement, integrated with livelihood enhancement programmes, and access to basic health-care services, including maternal, newborn and child health, sexual and reproductive health, food security and nutrition, housing and education, towards the eradication of poverty, to find durable solutions in the post-disaster phase and to empower and assist people disproportionately affected by disasters' (UNISDR, 2015: 19).

Complementing action in the post-disaster space, targeted and inclusive policies and programmes, including social safety nets, social protection measures and the provision of non-discriminatory and sustained access to systems and services before a disaster, could help reduce overall displacement risk (UNDRR, 2019a). This includes ensuring that people have the necessary documentation, such as identity cards, so that they can access critical services (UNDRR, 2019a) – pre- and post-disaster. In one example, the Mongolian Red Cross Society has helped 'displaced nomadic herders obtain national identity cards so that they can access educational, health and other services from the government' (IFRC, 2018: 27).

More concerted effort is needed to scale-up anticipatory approaches, such as forecast-based financing, crisis modifiers and adaptive social protection (see Peters and Pichon, 2017) – and to assess the extent to which these may directly be linked to reducing protracted and multiple displacement risk. Such measures offer the potential to reduce displacement risk: '[b]ased on pre-defined risk thresholds, risk reduction and

preparedness financing should be triggered at an early stage to enable Government authorities to implement targeted actions, in close coordination with humanitarian organisations, to reduce potential displacement and other negative impacts before a disaster strikes' (UNDRR, 2019a: 48).

Safety nets also have broader individual and societal benefits, including supporting people's well-being, protecting livelihoods and productive assets and ultimately helping tackle chronic poverty, reducing the number of people falling into poverty and sustaining poverty escapes (Shepherd et al., 2014; Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019; UNDRR, 2019a). In turn, preventing the erosion of social capital may help enhance people's capacity to prepare for, cope with and respond to disasters and reduce the risk of displacement (UNDRR, 2019a).

### Human rights-based approaches

Applying a human rights-based approach to decision-making and implementation around disaster displacement may help enhance protection outcomes for at-risk populations. There is growing operational interest in taking a human rights-based approach as a means to secure durable solutions, because of the emphasis it places on gender equality and non-discrimination, and rights to safe shelter, food, freedom of movement, housing, land and property, education, healthcare – including mental health and psychosocial support – livelihood support and access to legal advice (IASC, 2010; Scott, 2019; UNDRR, 2019a).

Initiatives to strengthen relationships between NDMAs and National Human Rights Institutions and Protection Officers – as has been done in the Philippines – could help build capacity and enforce international law around human rights, safety and protection. Doing so could also help establish a stronger commitment to a people-centred approach imbued with principles of equality, participation and non-discrimination as central to the delivery of systems and services across the risk management cycle. Critically, such processes should be accompanied by action research to document what changes in decision-making and outcomes this achieves.

UN agencies could support capacity strengthening, raise awareness of international standards and seek to simplify and articulate how to apply a human rights-based approach in DRR policy and practice. Doing so should help ensure that those most at risk of disaster displacement are consulted, and that their rights, needs and participation in decision-making are prioritised (Scott, 2019). This is particularly pertinent when working in poor areas with limited resources, to ensure that people living in informal or marginal settlements are formally recognised and included in local DRR strategies and plans (UNDRR, 2019a), and that all those most at risk of disaster displacement are included in the analysis, planning and implementation of DRM strategies and actions (IFRC, 2018; IDMC, 2019). Access to information so that people can make informed decisions is also essential, and it is important that any early warning or DRR information is communicated in the appropriate format and language and disseminated through relevant channels (UNDRR, 2019a).

## Recommendation 5: Pursue a whole-of-government approach to promote risk-informed sustainable development and reduce the risk of disaster displacement

### Whole-of-government approaches

As with all DRR, action is required beyond NDMAs and government departments specifically charged with dealing with disaster risk. This is recognised in the Sendai Framework, which outlines the need for national and local governments to 'promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk assessments [cross-sectorally] into land-use policy development and implementation, including urban planning, land degradation assessments and informal and non-permanent housing, and the use of guidelines and follow-up tools informed by anticipated demographic and environmental changes' (UNISDR, 2015: 18–19).

This call remains relevant in the context of reducing protracted and multiple displacement risk as DRR investment in structural measures (such as dams, flood levies, ocean wave

barriers, earthquake-resistant construction and evacuation shelters) and non-structural measures (building codes, land-use planning laws and their enforcement, risk assessments, information resources, training, education and public awareness programmes) could all help reduce people's vulnerability and exposure to hazards, in turn reducing the risk of disaster displacement (UNISDR, 2016).[17]

Vanuatu's Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016–2030 provides a good example of cross-sectoral coordination around climate change adaptation and DRR. The policy articulates the need to ensure 'inclusive participation in planning processes and effective implementation', as well as 'integrating disaster response and recovery into national, sectoral, provincial, municipal and community level plans'; 'developing guidelines and trainings to ensure appropriate standards and consistency when integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction into subnational planning and budgeting processes'; and 'providing special support for internally displaced populations' (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2015: 22). The policy also outlines the need for the cluster system to develop a national policy on resettlement and internal displacement (ibid: 25).

Similarly, the FRDP outlines an integrated approach to address climate change and disaster risk management that includes voluntary actions by national and subnational governments and administrations to '[e]nsure that finance and planning institutions play a central role in strategic, whole-of-country approaches for climate change and disaster resilient development, and that all opportunities for financial and technical support, climate change financing and insurance are pursued, with support from regional agencies'. It also highlights the need to protect 'individuals and communities that are vulnerable to climate change and disaster displacement and migration, through targeted national policies and actions, including relocation and labour migration policies' (Pacific Community, 2016: 15).

NDMAs should work closely with finance ministries and national planning agencies to ensure that there is an adequate understanding and systematic inclusion of hazard mapping and risk analysis in decisions around country development plans, infrastructure planning and the allocation of financial resources – and that cross-sectoral contingency plans and financial resources are allocated for disaster displacement.

Just as DRR needs to be integrated into development planning, so disaster displacement risk needs to be integrated sectorally into national and sub-national policies and frameworks to help promote a better understanding of the social safety nets, systems, services, plans and resources that can be drawn on (Scott, 2019). Put another way, more effective 'vertical integration between national, sub-national and local levels of government and organisations, and horizontal lesson-sharing and coordination between different sectoral ministries/departments and organisations to scale up action' is required to support inclusive policies and programmes around disaster displacement and risk-informed development (Lovell, 2019: 3–4).

NDMAs should work with national statistics offices to build cross-departmental disaggregated data collection systems on population movements, climate change and disasters, and to systematically enhance the collection and joint analysis of data to support the management of disasters and disaster displacement. Statistics offices should work with other ministries and departments through training and sustained support to ensure that this data is useful, and to help with modelling and mapping trends to inform policy and practice. At the same time, investment in technical capacity development of national statistical offices is required, so that they can meet the expectations of NDMAs and other sectoral ministries, and take on the recommendations outlined above.

17 'Structural measures are any physical construction to reduce or avoid possible impacts of hazards, or the application of engineering techniques or technology to achieve hazard resistance and resilience in structures or systems. Non-structural measures are measures not involving physical construction which use knowledge, practice or agreement to reduce disaster risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness raising, training and education' (UNDRR, 2017).

### Risk-informed sustainable development

Framings of risk are required which move beyond single hazards and grapple with the complex and dynamic drivers shaping disaster displacement. This demands that we collectively move towards a deeper understanding and recognition of the multiple, intersecting inequalities, threats and hazards influencing conditions of vulnerability and exposure, and human mobility (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2017; UNDRR, 2019b). This is particularly pertinent in multiple and protracted displacements in contexts where the risk drivers of hazard and violent conflict intersect, and the threat of human rights abuses is high.

One hypothesis yet to be empirically tested is that, with more risk-informed, sustainable development, the risk – and incidence – of disaster displacement would be reduced. For example, UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement (UNDRR; 2019a: 41) highlights how strengthening the 'quality of infrastructure, services and housing to reduce and withstand exposure to hazards through retrofitting and risk-informed development is the primary way to reduce displacement risk'.

By taking a broader perspective to understanding the social construction of risk – as increasingly encouraged through risk-informed approaches to development (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019; UNDRR, 2019b) – new opportunities are presented for how we understand and act on disaster displacement risk. This includes the need to develop a better understanding of risk drivers and risk tolerances (see Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019), and how these combine with development choices to shape conditions which may (or may not) lead to protracted and/or multiple disaster displacement. This requires utilising tools and methods to assess multiple threats and complex risks (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019).

## Recommendation 6: Achieve sustained and durable solutions

### Accountability to affected and at-risk populations

A durable solution is achieved when 'internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement' (IASC, 2010: A1). For solutions to be durable, they need to 'happen voluntarily, in safety and in dignity and involve overcoming all vulnerabilities associated with displacement' (IDMC, 2019: 68).

The challenge for governments and agencies is how to put the 'agency and choice of those affected at the core' of interventions and programmes (Twigg et al., 2017: 5), particularly where people's priorities will shift and change over time (Lovell et al., 2019). There is also often a trade-off after a disaster between delivering a rapid response and understanding the complexity of different socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental contexts, and people's needs and priorities (Chaplin et al., 2019).

Adherence to disaster displacement principles and guidelines should be made accountable through trialling, in a sub-set of countries, the establishment of a cross-ministerial 'Durable Solutions to Protracted and Multiple Disaster Displacements Working Group', and through systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress. Such a group would necessarily involve NDMAs, National Human Rights Institutions (or relevant bodies) and national statistics offices, alongside sectoral ministries relevant to the disaster risk management cycle, including land use and planning, climate and environment and gender equality, women's empowerment and/or women's protection.

This working group could identify roles and responsibilities and provide a dedicated cross-sectoral budget around disaster displacement to support durable solutions. In parallel, the working group should seek to articulate, on a case-by-case basis, what constitutes the attainment of a durable solution, to allow tracking of progress. Similarly, the establishment of a disaster displacement sub-working group under the country-level cluster mechanisms could help ensure more focused and concerted integration within national development plans and frameworks. Guidance already exists on initial steps for collaborative working and specific policies and programmes to address disaster-induced human mobility. These include: 'i) a review

of relevant national laws and policies; ii) analysis of human mobility patterns; iii) a clear allocation of roles, responsibilities, and resources with respect to disaster displacement, migration and planned relocation; iv) and operational measures both before and after disasters occur, including finding durable solutions for disaster displaced persons. Such policies or programmes could be drafted and monitored by a focal point and/or working group on disaster displacement within a DRR coordination structure' (UNDRR, 2019a: 42).

# 6 Conclusion

Protracted and multiple disaster displacement is an ever-present feature of the Asia-Pacific risk landscape. Yet action specifically aimed at reducing the protracted and multiple aspects of displacement risk is nascent, and far from systematically employed. Coming to terms with the new climate reality means that conventional approaches to reducing displacement risk may no longer be sufficient for many communities, particularly those in highly climate-vulnerable locations in Asia-Pacific. Measures to reduce and prevent such displacement necessarily require action and expertise from across development, humanitarian, peace and human rights cadres. Collaboration may foster new ideas, approaches and expertise, offering the promise of more comprehensive means to pursue the pinnacle outcome – 'durable solutions'.

While the need to invest early in prevention, preparedness and risk reduction continues to resonate in policy and operational debates about how to reduce or manage the risk of protracted and multiple disaster displacement, translating good intentions into concrete action requires more than technocratic fixes: it means confronting the societal barriers to securing sustainable, risk-informed development. Protracted and multiple disaster displacement exposes the inequitable distribution of resources, power and rights within affected societies, and the implicit and explicit choices and trade-offs policy-makers confront, for example reducing investment in DRM in favour of other economic and development priorities.

Understanding and addressing the underlying drivers of disaster displacement will require concerted action to systematically adopt existing guidelines and principles; bridge data gaps and enhance evidence on disaster displacement; integrate disaster displacement risk across the disaster management cycle; strengthen inclusive politics and enhance social safety nets; and pursue a whole-of-government approach to promote risk-informed sustainable development to achieve durable solutions.

Drawing on policy-makers' and practitioners' experiences, this paper outlines a typology and develops recommendations for reducing displacement risk. If we prioritise one recommendation, it would be to systematically adopt existing guidelines and principles: the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda; the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons; and UNDRR's Words into Action – Disaster Displacement. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Governments and agencies alike should make better use of what already exists, and where progress is slow, seek out empirical evidence to identify the barriers to and opportunities for adoption.

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# Annex 1 Definitions

**Table A1 Definitions**

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Affected | 'People who are affected, either directly or indirectly, by a hazardous event. Directly affected are those who have suffered injury, illness or other health effects; who were evacuated, displaced, relocated or have suffered direct damage to their livelihoods, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets. Indirectly affected are people who have suffered consequences, other than or in addition to direct effects, over time, due to disruption or changes in economy, critical infrastructure, basic services, commerce or work, or social, health and psychological consequences. Annotation: People can be affected directly or indirectly. Affected people may experience short-term or long-term consequences to their lives, livelihoods or health and to their economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets. In addition, people who are missing or dead may be considered as directly affected' (UNISDR, 2016: 11). |
| Disaster | 'A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts'.<br><br>Types of disaster:<br>• 'Small-scale disaster: a type of disaster only affecting local communities which require assistance beyond the affected community.<br>• Large-scale disaster: a type of disaster affecting a society which requires national or international assistance.<br>• Frequent and infrequent disasters: depend on the probability of occurrence and the return period of a given hazard and its impacts. The impact of frequent disasters could be cumulative, or become chronic for a community or a society.<br>• A slow-onset disaster is defined as one that emerges gradually over time. Slow-onset disasters could be associated with, e.g., drought, desertification, sea-level rise, epidemic disease.<br>• A sudden-onset disaster is one triggered by a hazardous event that emerges quickly or unexpectedly. Sudden-onset disasters could be associated with, e.g., earthquake, volcanic eruption, flash flood, chemical explosion, critical infrastructure failure, transport accident' (UNISDR, 2016: 13). |
| Disaster displacement | 'Situations where people are forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard. Such displacement results from the fact that affected persons are (i) exposed to (ii) a natural hazard in a situation where (iii) they are too vulnerable and lack the resilience to withstand the impacts of that hazard. It is the effects of natural hazards, including the adverse impacts of climate change, that may overwhelm the resilience or adaptive capacity of an affected community or society, thus leading to a disaster that potentially results in displacement. Disaster displacement may take the form of spontaneous flight, an evacuation ordered or enforced by authorities or an involuntary planned relocation process. Such displacement can occur within a country (internal displacement), or across international borders (cross-border disaster displacement)' (Nansen Initiative in UNDRR, 2019a: 59). |
| Disaster risk reduction | 'Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development' (UNISDR, 2016: 16). |
| Evacuation | 'Moving people and assets temporarily to safer places before, during or after the occurrence of a hazardous event in order to protect them. Annotation: Evacuation plans refer to the arrangements established in advance to enable the moving of people and assets temporarily to safer places before, during or after the occurrence of a hazardous event. Evacuation plans may include plans for return of evacuees and options to shelter in place' (UNISDR, 2016: 18). |

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Multiple/ repeat displacement | Multiple displacement refers to situations where people may be 'displaced multiple times for relatively short periods of time, returning to their place of origin when it is deemed safe, only to be displaced again months or years later, further undermining their resilience' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 98).<br><br>'Repeated displacement often destroys whatever assets IDPs may have acquired in their first site of displacement, essentially forcing them to start rebuilding their lives all over again in the new site. Multiple displacements can also exacerbate the pre-existing vulnerability of particular groups, such as older people' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 124). |
| Protracted displacement | Protracted displacement 'refers to situations in which tangible progress towards durable solutions is slow or stalled for significant periods of time because IDPs are prevented from taking or are unable to take steps that allow them to progressively reduce the vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization they face as displaced people, in order to regain a self-sufficient and dignified life and ultimately find a durable solution' (Kälin and Chapuisat, 2017: 20). |
| Resilience | 'The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management' (UNISDR, 2016: 22). |
| Vulnerability | 'The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards' (UNISDR, 2016: 24). |

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