

**KNOMAD Workshop**

**PLANNED RELOCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATURAL DISASTERS  
AND SLOW ONSET EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

**October 25, 2016  
World Bank, Washington, DC  
MC 6-100**

**SYNTHESIS NOTE**

**Introduction**

Georgetown University, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and UN University<sup>1</sup> have been engaged in developing [Guidance](#) for States and other stakeholders on planned relocation in the context of natural disasters and the slow onset effects of climate change. Planned relocation has been defined for this purpose as: *“a planned process in which persons or groups of persons move or are assisted to move away from their homes or places of temporary residence, are settled in a new location, and provided with the conditions for rebuilding their lives. Planned Relocation is carried out under the authority of the State, takes place within national borders, and is undertaken to protect people from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change, including the effects of climate change. Such Planned Relocation may be carried out at the individual, household, and/or community levels.”*

Disasters displaced an average of 26.4 million people per year since 2008 – a number which will likely increase. In this context, moving and settling people in new locations might become an increasingly viable protection option. However, the relocation of at-risk populations carries serious risks for those it is intended to benefit. Analogous experience demonstrates that relocating people is a complex endeavor with the strong potential to violate basic rights and leave people much worse off. States faced with situations where planned relocation may be needed lack guidance on the basic principles and rights that apply to this powerful and challenging option.

The *Guidance on Planned Relocation* therefore sets out general principles to assist States and other actors faced with the need to undertake these programs. The aspiration is that these general principles will be helpful to States and supporting actors in formulating Planned Relocation laws, policies, plans, and programs. The Guidance will be accompanied by a set of *Operational Guidelines*, to be developed in 2016-2017 which will include specific measures and examples of

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<sup>1</sup> Brookings Institution was a partner during the first stage of the project.

good practices to assist States in translating these general principles into concrete laws, policies, plans, and program.

As part of this process, the drafters of the guidance have embarked on a set of consultations with stakeholders to discuss the guidance and operational guidelines to be developed. The workshop convened on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 brought together more than ten World Bank experts with two of the drafters of the Operational Guidelines, Elizabeth Ferris and Susan Martin. Dr. Ferris is Research Professor at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University. She directs the project on Planned Relocation. Dr. Martin is Professor Emerita at Georgetown University and chairs the KNOMAD Thematic Working Group on environmental change and migration.

## **Synthesis**

The workshop was divided in three parts.

The first part consisted in a brief welcome by Dilip Ratha, Head of KNOMAD, and an introduction to the Guidance and Operational Guidelines by Susan Martin and Elizabeth Ferris. This Guidance was developed in a consultative process through a series of meetings between 2011 and 2015 which brought together representatives of States, international organizations, and experts from a wide range of disciplines and experiences. The planning and implementation of planned relocation needs to draw on expertise in a number of areas, such as disaster risk management, development, human rights, protection, humanitarian response, migration, and climate change adaptation. The basic premise behind the guidelines is that planned relocation is undertaken for the benefit of relocated persons and in a manner that respects and protects their rights and dignity. As such, States must have compelling reasons, robust evidence, and a sound legal basis for undertaking planned relocation. The specific needs, circumstances, and vulnerabilities of Relocated Persons and Other Affected Persons, as applicable, should be taken into consideration and addressed in all phases of the Planned Relocation. Further, planned relocation should provide opportunities and conditions to enable relocated persons to improve, or, at a minimum restore, their living standards; enable host populations to maintain their pre-existing living standards, or to attain the same living standards as relocated persons, whichever is higher; and mitigate adverse impacts related to the planned relocation that may affect persons who live in close proximity. The remainder of the guidelines address issues to be addressed in planning and implementing planned relocation, including information, consultation, and participation; measures pending and during physical relocation; conditions for rebuilding lives through livelihood restoration and other services; issues related to land and compensation; and monitoring and evaluation.

In the second part, Kanta Kumari (Co-Chair of KNOMAD's Thematic Working Group on environmental change and migration, and Lead Environmental Specialist, World Bank's Climate Policy Team) presented the work currently undertaken by the World Bank for an upcoming Flagship Report on "Climate Change, Human Mobility, and Securing Resilience". The report seeks to a) explore how climate change influences mobility patterns; b) characterize and project mobility likelihood outcomes at national and regional levels; and c) enable constructive dialogue on mobility within the discourse of longer-term planning for climate resilient development.

Climate change significantly threatens livelihoods, particularly of poorer people. Facing deteriorating ecosystems, the rate, pace and character of human movements - migration, displacement, and relocations - are transforming significantly beyond what we have known. While the climate signal may be strongest and more non-linear beyond 2050, it is the time between now and 2050 that we need to begin to change our paradigm. Successful management of climate change-mobility means enabling more resilient outcomes for all affected populations. This requires local adaptation strategies that enable people to stay where viable, while also providing safe, dignified, and orderly mobility options when staying would compromise resilience prospects or, in some cases, survival.

Part of these mobility solutions could be preventive resettlements, yet previous experiences show that the challenges and complexities of making these beneficial for affected populations are considerable. The Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC (2014), for instance, emphasizes that “there is insufficient evidence to judge the effectiveness of resettlement as an adaptation to climate change”. Nonetheless, governments are already engaged in planning resettlements ([de Sherbinin et al., 2011](#); [Biermann, 2012](#)) and the seminal [Foresight Report](#) (2011) notes that “resettlement could be a response to the issue of trapped populations”, one major concern of climate change impacts on mobility patterns. While important guidance on how to improve the use of resettlement as a preventative or responsive measure to disaster risk and displacement has been developed (e.g. in the [Nansen Protection Agenda 2015](#)), the flagship report welcomes the process of developing tangible operational guidelines based on the Guidance on Planned Relocation. The flagship report itself hopes to draw on these in order to establish recommendations that reflect the state of research.

In this second part of the workshop, Sofia Bettencourt and Elena Correa also gave brief presentations on operational experiences in managing population retreat in small island states (example of São Tomé and Príncipe) and on preventive resettlement of populations at risk (drawing on case studies in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala). Both streams of experiences have fed into the development of guidance for pertinent stakeholders – a [Knowledge Note on Managing Population Retreat from At-Risk Areas](#) by World Bank, SISRI, and GFDRR and a [Resettlement Guide for Populations at Risk of Disaster](#) by World Bank and GFDRR.

The experience in managing population retreat from small island states has shown that such retreat can be an adaptation strategy that helps a community to expand towards safer grounds when facing environmental risks. In the case of São Tomé and Príncipe, for instance, a World Bank project evolved into a planned relocation because of natural events and the desire of the affected community. The case constitutes an innovative example of how voluntary relocation can be financed through climate adaptation funding and a community-driven development plan according to the identified level of vulnerability. The example also shows, however, that such retreat needs to be accompanied by measures of protection and accommodation in other parts of the same community to enable people to maintain their livelihoods and social networks. Simultaneously, safe expansion zones need to act as growth poles. People moving voluntarily into the expansion areas may be assisted through a community-driven development process.

Such retreats are complex and challenges manifold. The challenges include, on the one hand, the prevention of new construction in the at-risk areas, the provision of sufficient incentives for voluntary move to expansion area, the identification of the most vulnerable through a

participatory process, the negotiation with land owners in expansion area, and the use of sustainable materials for construction. On the other hand, challenges also revolve around ensuring that expansion area is used by people at risk (and does not attract newcomers) as well as safeguarding that the expansion area is not further “expanded” into adjacent occupied land or into unsafe areas.

The World Bank Resettlement Guide for Populations at Risk of Disaster focuses on preventive resettlement. It highlights that disaster risk reduction (DRR) frameworks help to guide approaches of emergency assistance towards strategies for prevention and risk reduction. Resettlement can be part of DRR measures in the phase of risk reduction (preventive resettlement away from disaster risks), during emergency preparedness and response (as temporary resettlement to provide shelter), and during post-disaster reconstruction (resettling populations after disasters). The guidance on preventive resettlement is particularly instructive for the focus area of this workshop, i.e. planned relocation. Preventive resettlement can help to diminish the damage, losses and impacts caused by disasters in both monetary and non-monetary terms on human life and assets. While such resettlement carries significant costs, especially on assets (land, private public), it can also yield considerable monetary or non-monetary savings both indirectly and directly, especially concerning human life, structures, and other assets. In specific circumstances, preventive resettlement can turn the risks posed by disasters into an opportunity to reduce poverty and restore the balance that should exist between human settlements and the attributes of the natural environment. Here, preventive resettlement could become an instrument to promote an equitable and sustainable redistribution of population in developing countries and to improve the standards of living of the urban poor.

The Resettlement Guide explores institutional frameworks and strategies for disaster risk reduction and emphasizes how preventive resettlement, if undertaken, needs to be part of a comprehensive risk reduction framework. It furthermore details different resettlement strategies according to the characteristics and the type of the natural hazard present. It shows how the pertinence of preventive resettlement is subject to the spatial distribution of the hazard, the energy of the impact, the level of uncertainty encountered, and the possibility of mitigation. Finally, the report gives guidance for four phases: a) the formulation of a disaster risk reduction plan and determining the pertinence of resettlement, b) the preparation to plan and implement resettlement, as well as c) the analytical stage of and d) the planning stage of the formulation of the resettlement program.

The final phase of the workshop included an intervention by Charles Di Lea, Chief Counsel of the Environmental Law Unit, and a general exchange of ideas and contributions to the Operational Guidelines on Planned Relocation currently developed. It was emphasized that while the need of preventive, planned relocation has become clearer, for instance through the Cancún Adaptation Framework, there is still a lack of more specific operational guidelines that spell out the practical implications of the Guidance on Planned Relocation. The World Bank as an actor with pertinent experience on relocations in the context of development was seen as a welcome contributor to the development of such.

Questions arose as to whether such guidelines should differ for preventive and reactive relocations, as well as in the context of richer and poorer countries. Issues of place attachment as

well as land and housing rights were raised, too. Determining thresholds of risks for affected populations and consulting them were also described as challenging.

For practical experiences concerning consultations, a suggestion consisted in exploring the expertise that the ILO has developed in the context of its [Convention C169](#) that includes the right to consultation and participation for indigenous people. Furthermore, it was suggested to connect the drafting process of the operational guidelines to the [safeguards reform](#) taking place within the World Bank. A proposal to thoroughly consider in which format the guidelines could have most impact and practical relevance for operational agencies was welcomed. One approach would consist in providing tailored guidance to specific circumstances, for instance according to different hazard and regional characteristics, instead of a one-size-fits-all document. Such an approach could for example guide users to specific case studies and the lessons drawn from them in specified contexts of environmental risks and with given coping and adaptation capabilities. Finally, the discussants encouraged the drafters of the operational guidelines to continue the conversation with the World Bank and welcomed the planning of another workshop in spring that would bring together a wider range of practitioners from relevant organizations.

#### **ANNEX – Materials mentioned during the workshop and workshop agenda**

- [Guidance on Planned Relocation](#)
- [Knowledge Note on Managing Population Retreat from At-Risk Areas](#)
- [Resettlement Guide for Populations at Risk of Disaster](#)
- [Christchurch RRZ Recovery Plan](#)

#### **Workshop Agenda**

<b>13:30-13:40 h</b>	<p><b>Introductory Remarks</b></p> <p>Dilip Ratha, Lead Economist, DECIG, Head KNOMAD</p>
<b>13:40-14:00 h</b>	<p><b>Introduction to the “Guidance on Planned Relocation Arising from Natural Disasters and Climate Change”</b></p> <p>Susan Martin, Professor Emerita at Georgetown University, Chair of the KNOMAD Thematic Working Group on Environmental Change and Migration</p> <p>Elizabeth Ferris, Research Professor at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, Director of the project on Planned Relocation</p>

<p><b>14:00-15:15 h</b></p>	<p><b>Reflections on the World Bank’s Role in Planned Relocation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kanta Kumari Rigaud, Co-Chair of the KNOMAD Thematic Working Group on Environmental Change and Migration; Lead Environmental Specialist, Climate Policy Team</li> <li>• Sofia Bettencourt, Lead Adaptation Specialist for the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery</li> <li>• Elena Correa, Senior Social Development Specialist</li> <li>• Charles E. Di Leva, Chief Counsel, Environmental Law Unit</li> </ul>
<p><b>15:15-15:30 h</b></p>	<p><i>Coffee Break</i></p>
<p><b>15:30-16:45 h</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>Structured discussion on the six issues to be addressed in the Operational Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Populations at risk</li> <li>• Consulting with individuals and communities affected by planned relocations</li> <li>• Putting into place a comprehensive planning process</li> <li>• Ensuring appropriate legal frameworks</li> <li>• Developing mechanisms for compensation</li> <li>• Providing monitoring and accountability mechanisms</li> </ul> <p>The way forward: From the Guidance to the Operational Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach</li> <li>• Timeline</li> </ul>
<p><b>16:45-17:00 h</b></p>	<p><b>Concluding Remarks (Susan Martin)</b></p>