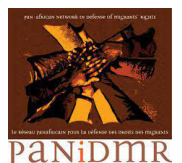


Policy Paper

Climate Change & Human Mobility In Africa: Global Political Implications

Mamadou GOÏTA



Contribution to discussions at the GFMD summit 2024

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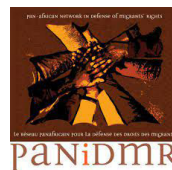
Policy Paper

Climate Change & Human Mobility In Africa: Global Political Implications

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Rationale

This policy brief will focus on Africa, taking into consideration cases from different regions covering linkages between climate change/climate variability and human mobility. It is built so far on discussions held in preparation the Global Forum on Migration and development (GFMD) and the exchanges on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) and will be used during different future migration events as Africa group contribution to the policies and practices changes with states as key players.

In this perspective, the policy brief with other initiatives on the same line will target the main points that civil society mechanisms have sought to defend over the past few years while preparing background documents and should further document and justify these positions. It should further elaborate on those key points from an African perspective and provide recommendations for states.

The underlying assumption is that climate variability and climate change are real and obviously is impacting and will impact migration narrative, policies and initiatives and there is a strong need for anticipation on protection measures for migrants and displaced persons' human rights.

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Introduction

Africa is facing a number of challenges that are hampering its progress towards inclusive and sustainable development, in a united and peaceful climate. Climate change, social conflicts and security challenges, and the governance of natural resources are all essential components of the major concerns facing many countries on the continent.

Over the past few decades, climate impacts have become more pronounced, affecting all key sectors of the African economy, as well as ecosystems and populations. Droughts, floods, rising temperatures, rainfall irregularities and sandstorms are all characteristic of these climatic impacts. Africa's socio-ecological vulnerability to climate fluctuations is all the greater in that the vast majority of countries are heavily dependent on natural resources, which are largely undermined by the extensive production systems associated with these climatic factors.

Changes in land use, particularly for crop production needs, essentially agro-pastoral systems and forestry, are central to the natural resource issues facing African countries. However, the exploitation of natural resources such as forests and arable land has developed without any consideration for their finiteness. What's more, climate impacts have contributed significantly to the depletion of certain surface natural resources such as trees, water points etc. This factor, combined with ambiguities in land tenure laws and the absence of effective governance of these resources, has led to violent conflicts between different communities and socio-professional particularly in the Sahel.

The security situation in the Sahel, for example, has deteriorated sharply and become more complex since 2012 with a rebellion in Mali doubled by terrorist attacks, undermining the peaceful cohabitation that has always characterized Sahelian societies.

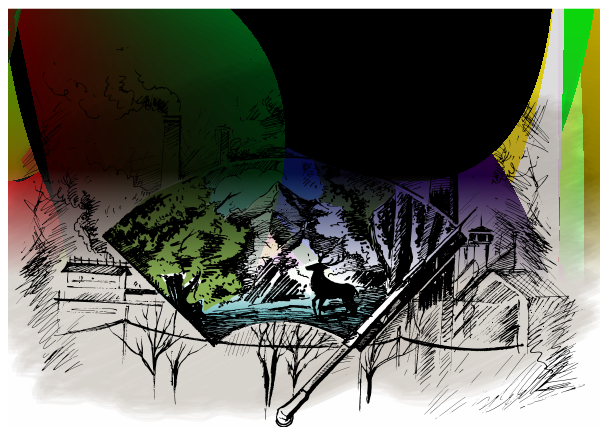
For reasons of scarcity and/or continued deterioration of resources, relations between certain social strata have become difficult. This is particularly true of herders and farmers, who are increasingly competing for access to and/or control of the natural resources available to their countries. In addition to farmers and livestock breeders, other users, notably fishermen (marine and freshwater)

and those who exploit natural resources for various uses and needs, are facing the same challenges, albeit to a lesser degree.

Unfortunately, responses to the major challenges by African authorities and their donor partners have most often been based on sectoral approaches that do not always make it possible to identify the interrelationships and interactions between the phenomena mainly climate change or variability and human displacements.

This policy brief aims to make a contribution with other documents to exploring the links between climate change and human mobility as a component of human rights, with a view to changing the policies and practices of the various players, particularly States.

Climate Mobility In Africa



Data on climate-displaced people in Africa are scarce and difficult to isolate from those displaced by other problems that many countries of the continent have been experiencing these last decades mainly violent conflicts. In various studies, it is pointed out however that the degradation of natural resources, the loss of biodiversity and the increased vulnerability of local populations, particularly those in the affected zones have led to a massive migration of populations towards to more "safe areas" but also outside countries (MEADD, 2019).

"By 2050, up to 5 percent of Africa's population of some 2 billion people could be on the move due to climate impacts, up from 1.5 percent today"¹

1 Amakrane, K., Rosengaertner, S., Simpson, N. P., de Sherbinin, A., Linekar, J., Horwood, C., Jones, B. et al. (2023) African Shifts: The Africa Climate Mobility Report: Addressing Climate-Forced Migration and Displacement. Africa Climate Mobility Initiative and Global Centre for Climate Mobility: New York.

According to the Africa Climate Mobility Report: Addressing Climate-Forced Migration & Displacement², by 2050, up to 5 percent of Africa's population of some 2 billion people could be on the move due to climate impacts, up from 1.5 percent today.

Africa is considered to be “one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world”. In fact, Africa is confronted to an urgent climate adaptation challenge to reduce the vulnerability in this climate crisis era. It is recognized that “Key development sectors across Africa have already experienced widespread losses and damages due to climate change, including biodiversity loss, water shortages, decreasing food production, loss of lives, and reduced economic growth. The current trajectory in global emissions leads to increasingly severe extreme heat, drought, flooding and coastal erosion, which will undermine livelihoods and make parts of the continent less habitable in the coming decades. Deteriorating living conditions will eventually force people to abandon areas where climate impacts are no longer tolerable”.

The African Shifts report set up figures and trends of “the current realities of climate-forced migration in Africa and possible scenarios for future climate displacement. It makes the case for integrating advance planning for climate mobility into Africa's strategies for climate change adaptation and climate resilient development, including countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in the context of the UNFCCC process”.

In addition, an “Agenda for Action with eight key actions for the next eight years (2023 to 2030), in line with the Decade for Action to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement”.

Thus, Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI) is a partnership between the African Union Commission, the World Bank, and the United Nations that aims to address climate-forced migration and displacement in Africa, and harness climate mobility for the continent's collective resilience and development.

The Africa report shows that there is a “widespread lack of knowledge about the connections between climate change and its impacts on livelihoods”. For those compelled to move due to climate impacts, relocation is often too costly. As a result, people remain in place at the

risk of being forced to evacuate in worse circumstances or becoming stranded. Many people forcibly displaced by extreme and sudden climate shocks return home, as their livelihoods depend on their places of origin. Others settle in new locations where they remain vulnerable and exposed to climate risks. Hence, unplanned climate mobility can result in new risks and vulnerabilities.

“More severe climate disruptions, combined with Africa's growing population, are forecast to propel increased movement in the coming decades. By 2050, up to 5 percent of Africa's population of some 2 billion people could be on the move due to climate impacts, up from 1.5 percent today. The overwhelming majority of this movement will happen within countries rather than across borders”.

Climate mobility is a reality of the moment and efforts should be made to better prepare African countries to play their roles with policy measures but also supporting researches and actions that can contribute to adapt to the new trends.

ACMI main findings in terms of scenario by 2050

ACMI modelled four possible scenarios for future climate mobility in Africa. The first set of scenarios assumes a low emissions future in line with the Paris Agreement goals, combined with two different possible development trajectories, an inequitable versus inclusive development future. The second set of scenarios assumes a continuation of the current trajectory of high emissions based on the currently limited progress on the necessary rapid reduction of green house gas emissions in the near term. These are combined with the same two possible development futures. In light of rising emissions despite the Paris Agreement, the report prioritized the high emissions scenarios to discuss likely future climate mobility projections for the continent.

Under a high emissions and inequitable development scenario (Rocky Road), internal climate mobility within countries could reach up to 113 million people by mid-century. A high emissions and inclusive development scenario (High Road) could see up to 95 million people forced to move by 2050. The most affected region will be the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) region, where up to 10.5 percent of the

2 Idem

population — or up to 55 million people — could be on the move by 2050 under the Rocky Road scenario.

Hotspot areas of climate mobility, where a high concentration of in- and out-mobility will take place, emerge across the continent. People are predicted to move towards areas where climate conditions are forecast to be relatively better. Borderlands emerge as climate mobility hotspots, such as between Niger and Nigeria, around Lake Victoria, and in the Horn of Africa.

Rural areas will see farmers leaving rain-fed lowlands as well as big population shifts in pastoral lands. At the high end, pastoral areas in Rwanda could see around 3 million people leave due to adverse climate impacts. Meanwhile, the population in Ethiopia's pasturelands could grow by 279,000 people by 2050 due to climate mobility.

Along the coasts, sea level rise and flooding will force people to move out of low-lying areas, despite the opportunities they currently provide. Coastal areas around Africa could lose up to 2.5 million people by 2050 due to steady sea level rise, flooding, and other climate stressors. Under the High Road scenario, inclusive development choices that reduce vulnerability and build climate resilience seem to offset these climate impacts, enabling people to stay in their home communities.

Africa's cities will be dynamic hotspots of climate mobility. Cities will continue to grow swiftly, although, on a continental scale, climate impacts could force up to 4.2 million people out of urban areas by 2050. Casablanca, Accra, and Abidjan are among the cities projected to see people leave due to climate impacts. In most small African cities and towns, climate mobility will add to population growth. Khartoum, Maputo, Goma, Tripoli, and Kigali also emerge as important climate mobility destinations on the continent.

Cross-border climate mobility is forecast to reach a maximum of 1.2 million people by 2050 under the High Road scenario. Climate mobility may contribute up to 10 percent of cross-border migration by 2050. Most cross-border movement will be in Southern Africa, where mobility between neighboring countries is forecast to increase due to favorable climate impacts on crop yields that could enable people to undertake longer journeys.

It is recognized that the challenges are high and difficult to overcome. However, with better political will, good and coherent policies supported by relevant programmes

embedded in local perspectives, the continent can build resilience and mitigate various bad effects and consequences of the current climate trends. This means that there is a strong need for individual states but also regional economic commissions (RECs) and African Union (AU) with the support from municipalities to join their efforts in implementing various initiatives among others "inclusive development pathway, investments in social protection, climate information services and literacy, and sustainable urbanization."

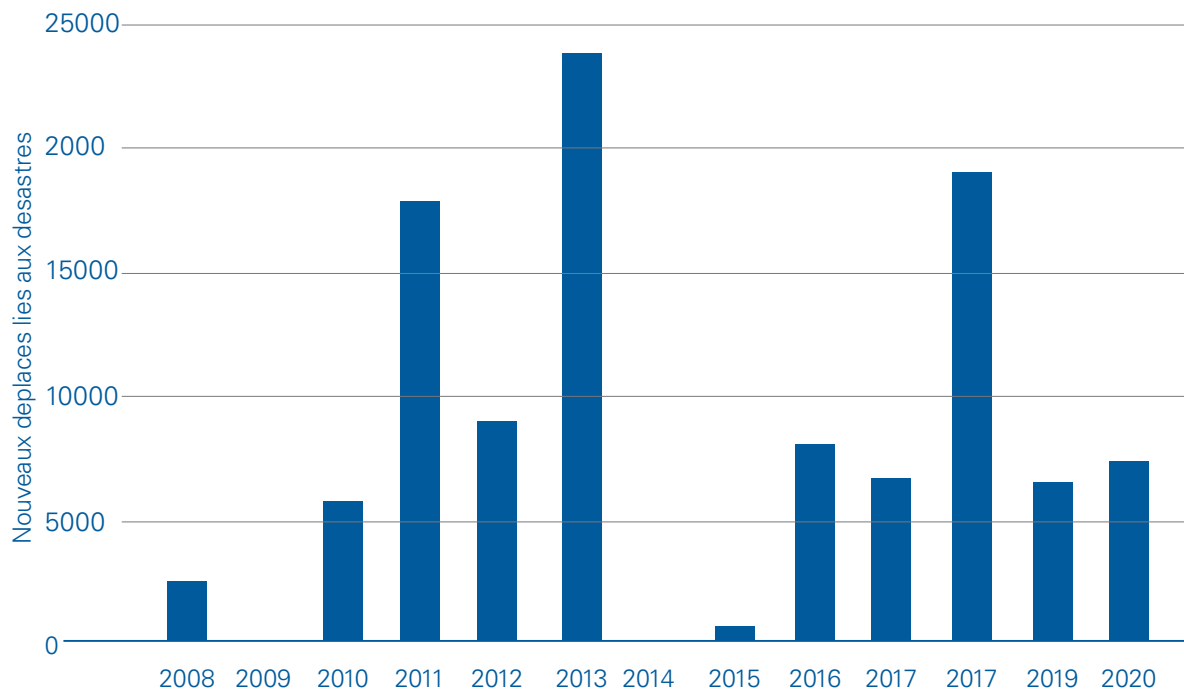
Mali case study

According to the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery, around 12% of Mali's population is affected each year by climatic hazards, sometimes resulting in loss of life in addition to economic losses (GFDRR, 2019). National meteorological data show a shift in isohyets of almost 200 km towards the south of the country and a sharp decline in rainfall over the last forty years (PSM, 2020).

The evolution of the rainfall index and its five-year moving average for Mali between 1950 and 2017 is characterized by a general downward trend in rainfall (MEF, 2019). According to the "Plan Sécheresse du Mali 2021-2025", climate variability has become more pronounced on a local scale, and rainfall has become increasingly unpredictable. The persistent drop in rainfall has consequences for the level of water resources, as well as for the level of fauna and flora. These climatic impacts reduce the opportunities available to local communities through the increasing scarcity of natural resources, particularly the land on which they are heavily dependent, making them even more vulnerable. It is also not uncommon to see increasingly frequent tensions between farmers, and especially between farmers and herders, over land occupation.

The main climate risks in Mali are: drought, fluctuating rainfall and floods, increase temperature, climate migrations etc. thus, Human mobility is one of the very visible consequences of such situations prevailing in the country. According to estimates by the International Displacement Monitoring Centre, Mali recorded around 7,400 new displaced persons linked to natural disasters between January and December 2020 (IDMC, 2021).

In an article, von Uexkull & Buhaug (2021) provide an in-depth analysis of the indirect links between climate



change, agricultural production and conflict. Their analysis suggests that the impacts of climate change on agricultural production are not evenly distributed, and the magnitude of these impacts varies between community groups, and between rural and urban areas in Africa.

Declines in agricultural, forestry (especially gathering), pastoral and fisheries production in rural areas can reduce the livelihoods of rural households and lead to temporary or permanent migration as a coping mechanism to climate risk exposure (Black et al., 2011).

The response to climate impacts by vulnerable populations, including herders and farmers, is also reflected in population movements from the areas most affected by the climate to less-affected areas. Young people and women are the main categories of persons exposed to mobility perspective in and out of their countries. These movements include among others forced displacements, voluntary migration planned relocation etc.

It is recognized that climate change impacts on labor migration as it impacts negatively on agriculture, fishing industry, and other means of livelihood. It drives young, productive people to move away to earn an income and send back remittances. If not well planned and managed, the movement may lead to violence and/or other pernicious challenges with very negative consequences.

Recommendations For States

It is obvious that urgent actions are needed to protect vulnerable populations against the hardship effects of climate and climate mobility. International solidarity is needed in using different pan African instruments (Africa Free Movement Protocol, Agenda 2023 and related tools and international legal instruments (GCM, GCR etc.).

For the sake of pushing states to play their roles, CSOs recommend for states :

- **Fostering qualitative and reliable data:** Data management is a deeply politicized practice, particularly because it is linked to the power and intent of whoever collects the data. External influence in the creation and management of data needs to be corrected in the region. African States must provide the resources, institutions, academic support and funding needed for academic researchers, think tanks and African organizations to create data. This effort must have the integrity of not being used as a migrant policing tool that can put migrant communities at greater risk. The African stakeholders including civil society and volunteer involving organisations, universities,

research centers must have their own database on climate change and mobility. The global spaces must encourage the management of reliable data, in terms of its production, monitoring and use. Countries with relatively weak research facilities should be supported to improve their production, dissemination and open data mechanisms in the region. Investing resources on data to produce necessary facts and information that will help in decision making processes. The set of necessary data should be produced at local, national, regional, pan African and international levels in a coherent way;

- Work on coherent policies and programmes that can help to mitigate the drastic consequences of climate change and mobilize resources for their implementation;
- Work with all relevant actors that can contribute to enhance the quality of the adaptation measures rooted in strong data and facts. It is recommended to work in multi-actors' spaces where CSOs can play strong roles with other constituencies mainly municipalities and traditional leaders;
- Support capacity building programmes for developing better knowledge on the links between climate change and human mobility for more efficient actions.
- Contribute to consolidating the achievements of women and children's rights. As such, it must motivate states and all other stakeholders to facilitate the unconditional access of women and children to basic social services (education, health, clean water ...) and other public services in relation to their needs as vulnerable groups in move due to climate change or variability. Opportunities should be given to women to achieve their goals in term of positive contribution to the SDGs.
- Focus and address more on Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) linked to climate hazards to mitigate their deep consequences of countries' stability and poverty alleviation. For that sake, data collection on displacement and intra-Africa mobility for better knowledge on the phenomenon is instrumental for decision making at national, regional and pan African levels.

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