

**CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT**



**ANIL AGARWAL DIALOGUE 2020**

# **ANNUAL MEDIA CONCLAVE ON THE STATE OF INDIA'S ENVIRONMENT**

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# **CLIMATE EMERGENCY: THE HUMAN TRAGEDY OF MIGRATION**

**Presented by**

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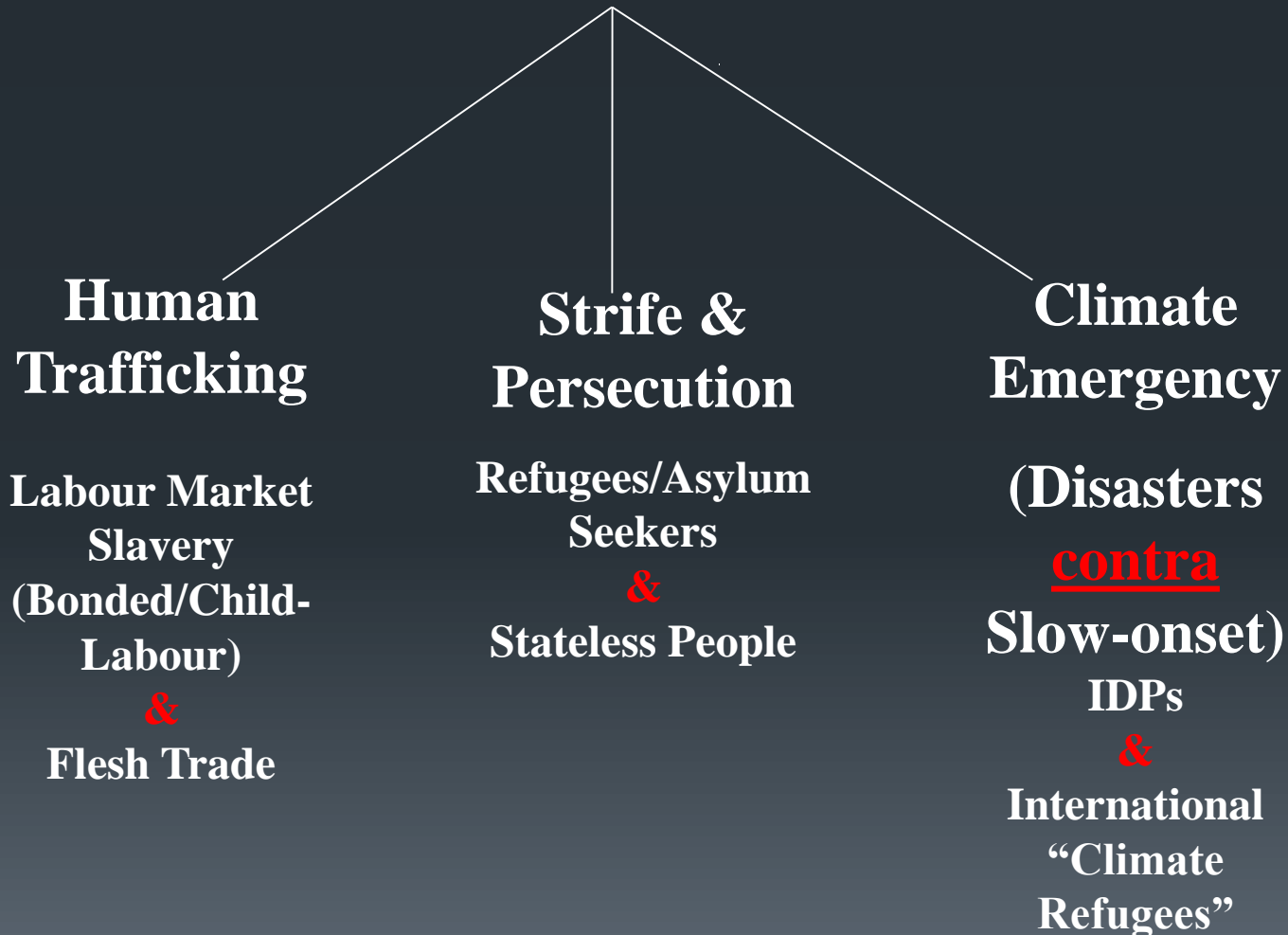
**Session**

**A State of Climate Emergency**

**9 Feb. 2020**

**Nimli, Alwar, Rajasthan**

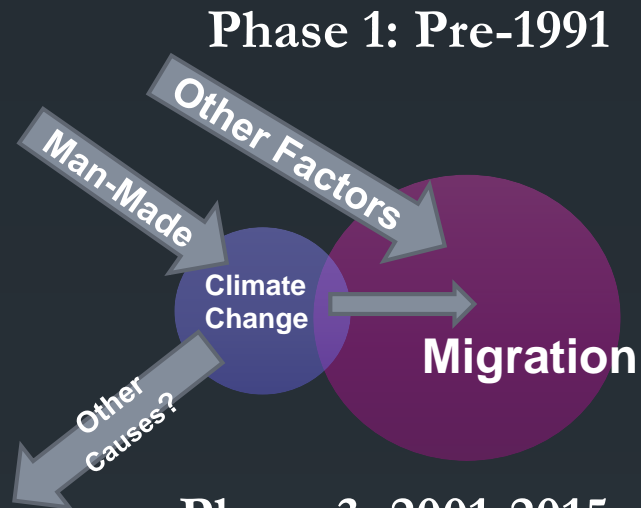
# The Trinity of “Migration-Tragedy”



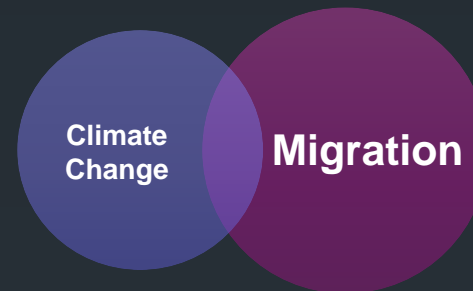
When **“Choice”**, Migration is Not a Tragedy but an Adaptation Strategy.  
But when **“Necessity”**, Migration can become a Tragedy arising from Environmental Degradation through Population Pressure on the Ecology.

The Nexus between Climate and Migration can be either.

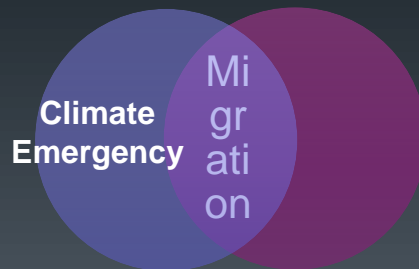
**Increasingly, Climate Emergency has become a “Driving Force” to make Migration a “Necessity” and therefore a Tragedy both for migrants and the hosts.**



**Phase 2: 1991-2001**



**Phase 3: 2001-2015**



**Phase 4: 2016-2030**





# WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2020



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# “Migrants caught in Crisis” is now a Generic Phenomenon that includes those hit by Disasters caused by Climate Emergency

In recent years, flooding in Bangladesh and Thailand, major hurricanes in North America, conflicts in Libya and Yemen, as well as political and economic crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, have created the need for emergency assistance and urgent protection of migrants. Each of these places hosted migrants prior to and during the crisis, including permanent residents, temporary workers, business travellers, tourists and students, as well as asylum seekers and refugees.

The issue of migrant vulnerability in crisis contexts has been brought to the attention of the international community following large humanitarian emergencies. Lower-intensity (but often higher-frequency) events – such as urban fires and accidents, localized landslides and episodes of violence – can also disproportionately affect migrants, who may be living in areas more susceptible to these hazards. Experience from all crisis events shows that patterns of marginalization and exclusion increase migrants’ vulnerability to most hazards. Different crises, whether large- or small-scale, affect migrants in different ways (see appendix A), and will result in different operational interventions or actions.





# Earthquake

Between 2010 and 2011, Christchurch was hit by a series of earthquakes that killed 185 and heavily damaged the city. In the aftermath of the disaster, service providers progressively built their capacity to assist and communicate with local migrant and refugee residents, which still faced significant obstacles in accessing translated information and culturally appropriate basic services.

While many migrants showed exceptional resilience in the face of the events, newly settled communities, and the more marginalized individuals within the different migrant groups were among the least able to cope with and recover from the disaster.





## Natech disaster

On 11 March 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck Japan, triggering a tsunami that caused a failure at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. Affected areas hosted an estimated 700,000 foreign residents and visitors. 23 of them were killed and 173 injured.

Non-Japanese speaking people had little access to official, updated information on the disaster, which led to confusion and widespread fears. Following recommendations disseminated through informal sources and even embassies and home country media, some 470,000 foreigners left Japan in the aftermath of the disaster, including from areas deemed not at risk. This, in turn, caused intracommunal tensions with Japanese citizens.

# Public health emergency



In early 2014, the Ebola virus spread from Guinean rural areas to cities, then to Liberia and Sierra Leone. During the following two years, the virus killed over 11,000 people, including in Mali, Nigeria and the United States.

In a region characterized by intense population mobility across porous borders, migration represented a challenge to rapid containment of the outbreak, resulting in the enforcement of sanitary controls at entry points, and in some cases in flights being suspended or border closed. Following the outbreak, African migrants experienced scapegoating and xenophobia all over the world.



## Fires

Between May and June 2016, fires swept the area around Fort McMurray, triggering the evacuation of around 90,000 people. No victims were reported in the disaster, but residents faced profound, long-lasting social and economic impacts.

Migrants working in the area faced specific insecurity: many had no friends or family to support with accommodation, and those on temporary work permits risked losing their regular status as their employers' businesses shut down. In addition, many migrant workers sending remittances back home had little savings and no access to unemployment benefits, and were left with limited options to cope.

Beyond the UNFCCC and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, environmental migration continues to be discussed in various thematic policy processes. This includes but is not limited to, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the work under the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the discussions conducted by the tripartite constituents of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Executive Committee as well as IOM governing body mechanisms.<sup>29</sup> All these global policy spaces have devoted specific sessions to migration and displacement in the context of climate change, disaster and environmental degradation. Other processes – such as the small island developing States focused SAMOA Pathway or dealing with key environmental issues such as oceans, ecosystems or water – are also incorporating

Of particular note is the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), which is a State-led initiative that seeks to bring migration and environmental change together to address the protection gap for persons displaced across borders, and in particular to implement the Nansen Protection Agenda adopted by 108 countries in 2015.<sup>30</sup>

## However, there is a North-South Divide of Migrants trying to cope with Tragedies triggered by Climate Change

When the 2011 Brisbane floods occurred in Australia, culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders in immigrant and refugee acted as gatekeepers and communicated emergency responses to the

While in Thailand, restrictions on mobility stemming from administrative barriers limited the mobility of many migrant workers affected by floods, who had to choose between staying in flooded, risky areas or face possible loss of legal status, arrest and deportation.



## National Policies must precede International Initiatives

- THE TWO-WAY BINARY OF ENVIRONMENT-MIGRATION NEXUS NEEDS TO BE CENTRE-STAGED IN NATIONAL POLICIES FIRST BEFORE BEING TAKEN TO THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL FORA



# What Does World Migration Report 2020 have to say about National Policy Developments

A 2018 mapping conducted under the Task Force on Displacement workplan highlights that national policies on migration on the one hand, and climate change on the other hand, increasingly consider environmental migration issues.<sup>33</sup> Out of 66 countries and territories reviewed, 53 per cent made reference to climate change and environmental factors in their national migration and displacement frameworks. Out of 37 countries and territories having submitted national climate change adaptation policies, plans or strategies, 81 per cent referred to human mobility.

The full report is available at <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/iom-pdd-task-force-displacement-stakeholder-meeting>

## India does not have a Comprehensive Migration Policy comprising both Immigration and Emigration!

- The archaic 1922 Migration Policy still prevails.
- There is a new Draft Emigration Bill 2019 to replace the Emigration Act 1983, yet to be adopted. Under migrants' welfare and protection, it does not have any specific reference to the nexus between Migration and Climate/Environmental Emergencies.

I don't know if India's Policy on Climate Change and Environment addresses issues of Migration, whereas over 80% of countries surveyed by IOM do.

- I believe it would have reference to **Internal or Domestic Migration** in the context of **“Urbanization”**.
- As for International Migration, it ought to have addressed the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh to India, particularly in Assam, **due to floods** as the **Ganges-Brahmaputra-Padma delta** feels the impact of **sea-level changes**.

# What is required is A “Smart Engagement” of the Inter-Diaspora Youth Lobbying in Global Migration Governance

## Two Preconditions need to be met by the GCM?

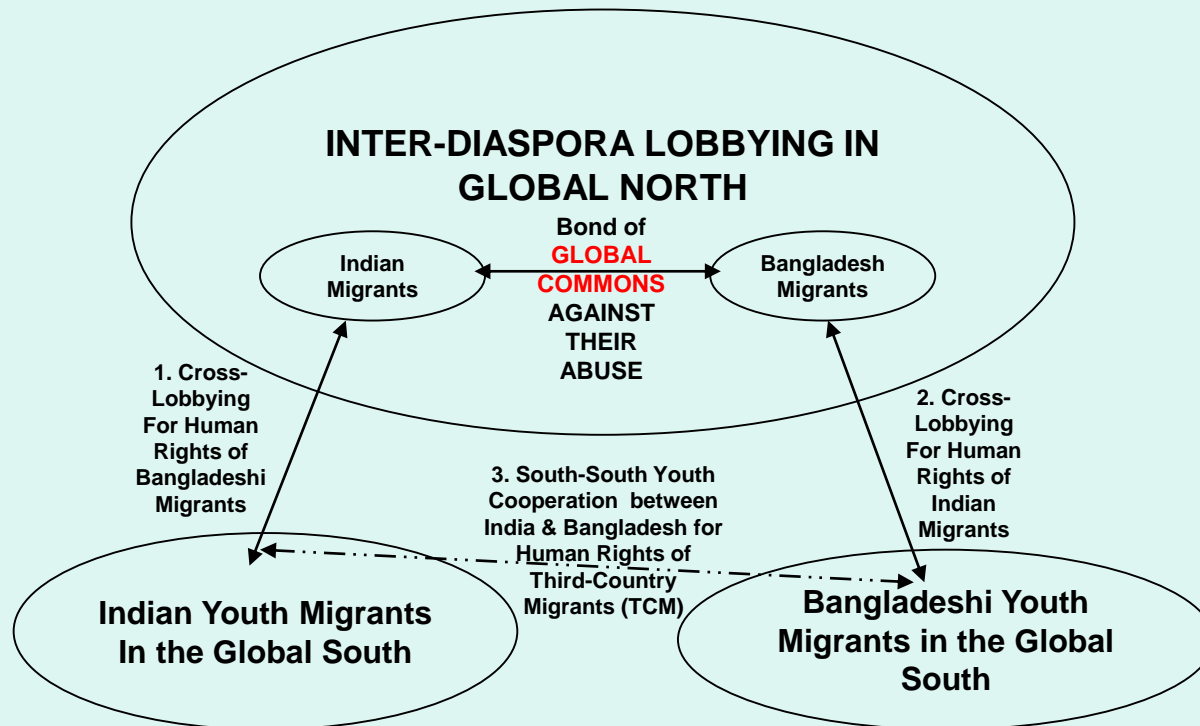
1. Save the Migrant-Data from “Dementia in Consular Practices”
2. Introduce “Best-Before Dates” in all New Visa Policies to safeguard

**STABILITY in MIGRATION CHOICES**  
made by the migrants in choosing their habitation

## Two Innovations need to be put on the high-agenda of the GCM?

1. Encourage Permanent Residency through S-S Cooperation.  
This would help stem abuse of Human Rights by  
Promoting Temporary Return **Contra** Temporary Migration of  
Climate Refugees
2. IDYC for **Third-Country Migrants** through S-S Cooperation  
in strengthening Multilateral Fora like  
the **Colombo Process** and the **Abu-Dhabi Dialogue** rather than  
Obsession with “Diaspora for Homeland Development”.

**The Need of the Hour is to Initiate an Instrument of Coping:  
EAA: EQUITABLE ADVERSARY ANALYSIS  
Inter-Diaspora Youth Cooperation (IDYC) should be added to  
GCM Objective No. 19 to specifically address the  
Tragedy of Climate Refugees**





WHO CAN BE THE EFFECTIVE  
CATALYST?



HOPEFULLY THE FOURTH ESTATE?





Thank you