

ANNEX TO BACKGROUND PAPER 2.2

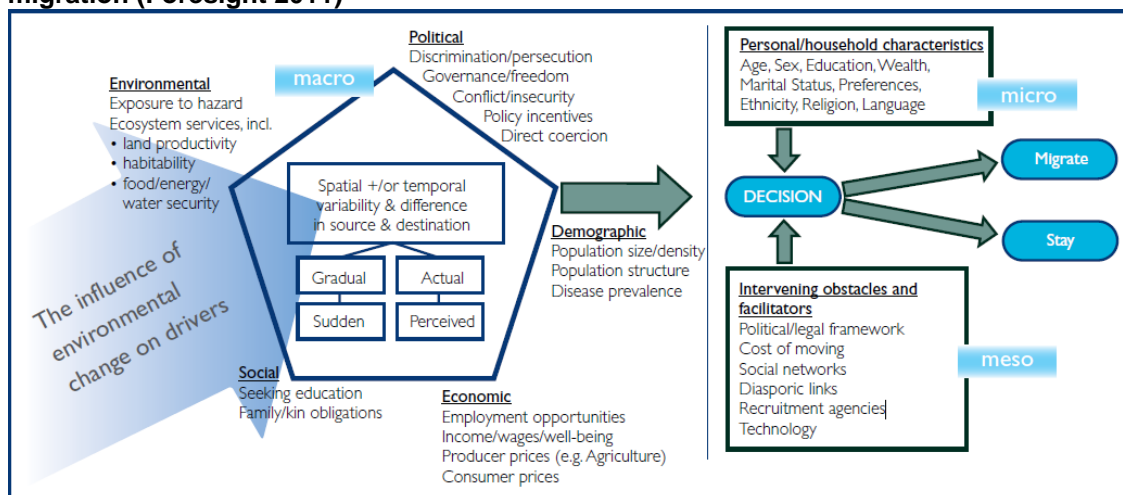
Input by Foresight to 2012 GFMD Roundtable 2.2

Migration, development, environmental change and adaptation

The relationship between environmental change and migration has seen an upsurge in attention in recent years. Much of the impetus originates from environmental commentators and has often been characterised by a perspective which sees migration as a ‘failure’ of climate policies. These contributions have succeeded in raising awareness of migration and environmental change, to the extent that the issue is mentioned in the Cancun Adaptation Framework of the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change. Yet it is important that the GFMD grasps hold of this debate,, building on the discussions at the 2010 GFMD Roundtable 3.2, to ensure it is informed by a nuanced understanding of the synergies between migration and development. There are three areas where this is particularly appropriate:

- 1. Understanding how environmental change influences decisions to move and the drivers of migration.** The Foresight Report ‘Migration and Global Environmental Change’ (2011)¹ illustrates this relationship in the conceptual framework in Figure 1. Environmental change, which includes climate change, does not directly cause migration but rather interacts with five existing migration drivers which often underpin South-South migration, including economic drivers, such as employment opportunities and wages, and social drivers, such as access to education and family obligations.

Figure 1: Foresight’s conceptual framework for how environmental change affects migration (Foresight 2011)



There are two important implications for the relationship between migration, development and the environment. First, a key force is the *disparity* or *variability* in source and destination areas, or at least the perception of such

¹ The Foresight Report was based on contributions from over 350 experts from more than 30 countries across the world. The report’s findings were informed by four international workshops in Dhaka (Feb 2011), Istanbul (Feb 2011), Kathmandu (March 2011) and Johannesburg (March 2011); following publication the report’s findings have been tested and developed in a workshop with the Government of Ghana in Accra (March 2012). The report has been led by the UK Government Office for Science, although the findings do not constitute the policy of the UK or of any other government.

'deficits', in key indicators of development: economic progress, social access, political freedoms, and so on. For example, environmental change may exaggerate *existing* income differentials between rural and urban areas and thus increase the *desire* to migrate. Second, and running counter to the first trend, the *ability* to migrate is often determined by individual wealth, social networks and political/legal status (shown on the right of Figure 1). A result of these conflicting trends is that the poorest, without access to economic, political or social capital, may be the most vulnerable to environmental change, yet have the fewest options to migrate, especially internationally. This 'trapped population' is shown in Figure 2 below.

- **Key question:** what should be the GFMD's role in regards to this vulnerable population who do not have access to (especially international) migration?

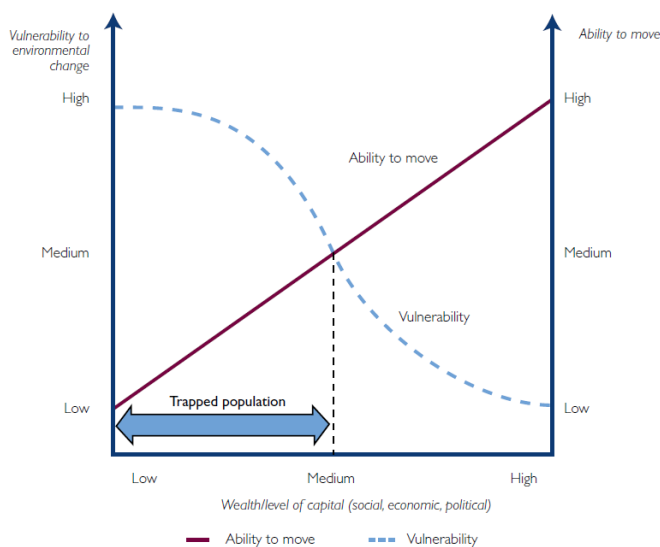


Figure 2: Representation of how the level of wealth/capital (social, economic or political) correlates with vulnerability to environmental change and at the same time determines ability to move (Foresight 2011)

2. Migration can be part of a portfolio of actions taken by individuals, households or communities to adapt to environmental change and reduce vulnerability. Rather than seeing migration as a 'failure', the Foresight report builds on the work of the GFMD which sees migration as an important tool for development. The report extends this argument to show how this migration-development dynamic also has positive outcomes for *adaptation* to environmental change. For example:

- Migration allows a diversification of livelihoods so that households or communities are no longer over-dependent upon rural income streams which are more vulnerable to environmental change.
- Remittances have been shown to increase following environmental disasters in Jamaica and Philippines (Wallsten 2004; Yang and Choi 2007); migration thus increases the resilience of communities to environmental events and reduces resulting forced migration.
- Migration can allow individuals to build geographically-dispersed social networks and enables the sharing of best practice to deal with environmental challenges.

Climate change threatens existing development gains made by many countries in the global South, with Africa one of the most vulnerable (IPCC 2007). The GFMD have led international efforts to understand the positive relationship between migration and development;

- **Key question:** should the GFMD also consider how this relationship can help solve one of the most strategically important challenges the global South is facing, in climate change?

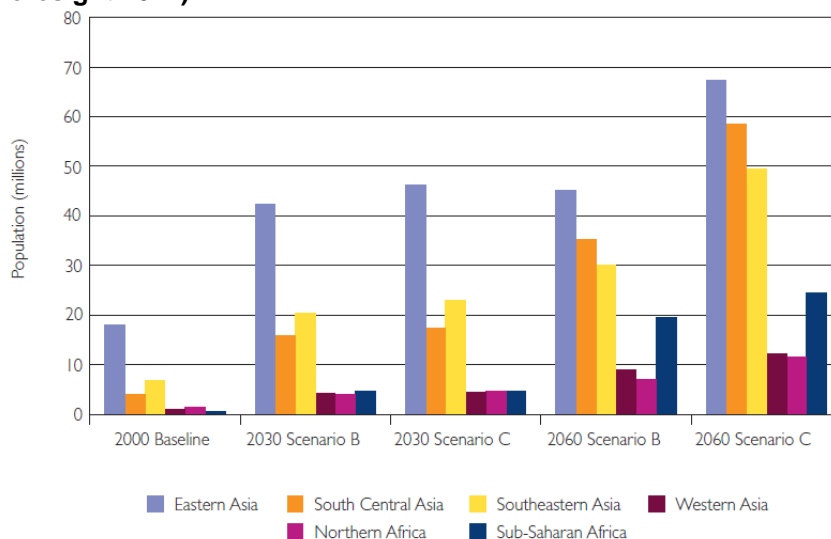
The evidence in the Foresight report suggest that it should, especially because a positive approach to especially internal migration will assist those ‘trapped populations’ highlighted above.

3. If urban planning is not adequate, migration and environmental change may combine to undermine development in receiving areas.

The Foresight Report shows that in certain scenarios, 192 million additional people will be living in urban coastal floodplains in Africa and Asia by 2060, locations which will become increasingly environmentally vulnerable (see **Figure 3**). Much of this increase will be because of rural-urban migration, yet the Report cites evidence that policies to reduce rural-urban migration often fail (Beuchemin and Schoumaker 2005, Bakewell 2008, Massey et al 2010). Instead, effective policies build physical and social infrastructure to ensure that migrants are safe where they arrive, are able to contribute to communities, yet can retain links to origin communities (including migrating back-and-forth).

- A **key question** is whether the GFMD should focus on migration to fast-developing urban areas which are vulnerable to climate change, and policies which can address resultant challenges through:
 - providing safe, clean and affordable housing to migrants;
 - ensuring water and sanitation infrastructure is adequate where migrants arrive;
 - providing access to education services, health services and social benefits, which migrants are often unaware of or unable to access;
 - ensuring migrants can send cheap and affordable remittances, including to rural areas and where amounts are very small.

Figure 2: People living in urban coastal flood zones in 2060 (Vafeidis 2011, reproduced in Foresight 2011)



Explanatory note: Scenario B is lowest and Scenario C is highest, therefore representing the full range from these scenarios.

In summary, over 350 experts from 30+ countries have contributed to the Foresight analysis which shows it is beneficial to consider migration, development and the environment together. If policy approaches which are already under consideration in the GFMD are built upon and tailored, then migration can facilitate adaptation to the global challenge of environmental change. Migrants may be particularly vulnerable to environmental change which can endanger important development gains. The forum of the GFMD is very well placed to lead the international debate on the links between these issues.

Foresight, 24th August 2012

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