

COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

A REPORT BY THE UK CLIMATE CHANGE & MIGRATION COALITION (UKCCMC)



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The UK Climate Change & Migration Coalition (UKCCMC)

is an alliance of refugee, human rights, development and environmental organisations. We exist to challenge the lack of long-term strategies to support and protect people at risk of displacement linked to environmental change. We aim to foster cross sector dialogue and cooperation to bring about a people centred response at the national and international level.



**UK Climate Change
& Migration Coalition**

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The topics of climate change and human migration attract considerable public and media attention. Together, they represent a potentially explosive combination. Attempts to communicate about climate change and migration risk inflaming two already heated debates. However, the language is not yet entrenched. A major opportunity exists to shape how the debate develops.

This briefing explains the basic principles of good communication on the issues. It is intended for use across the refugee, environmental, human rights and development sectors.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

– THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The relationship between climate change and the movement of people is complex. Beyond the difficulties involved in measuring the impact that climate change is having (and will have) on human migration – within and between national borders, voluntary and involuntary – there is a major communications challenge. Individually, the topics of climate change and human migration attract a considerable degree of public and media attention. Together, they represent a potentially explosive combination, with the risk that attempts to communicate about climate change and migration could inflame two already heated debates.

Inevitably with such a complex problem, different sectors have approached the issue from different angles. Within the UK Climate Change & Migration Coalition (UKCCMC), different terms, language and narratives are promoted by organisations with different perspectives on the problem. Merging these two already contentious subjects is an unenviable communications

challenge. Whether through confusion and misunderstanding about technical terms, or through the adoption of language and approaches that do not ‘map over’ well to a different audience, there is a significant danger that campaigns on climate change and migration could backfire.

For organisations seeking urgent action to prevent dangerous climate change, climate-induced migration is an important method of humanising an often very de-humanised issue. The more the climate changes, the greater the impact on human populations will be. However, attributing a particular episode of migration to climate change suffers from the same problems as attributing extreme weather events to climate change. Typically, it is only possible to deal in risks and probabilities – which are far more difficult to communicate than simple causal relationships.

Climate change brings with it a range of public perceptions – not all of them positive. Among the general public

there is significant uncertainty about the scale and the impacts of climate change, a general lack of knowledge of the science, and to some extent scepticism about whether humans are responsible for it. There are also widespread misconceptions about what an ‘immigrant’ is.¹ People are most likely to think of asylum seekers and least likely to think of students, whereas in fact, students represent the largest group of immigrants coming to the UK while asylum seekers are the smallest group. There is significant opposition to asylum seekers coming to the UK – the group that most people think of when they think about immigration.

The risk is that without a pro-active approach, climate change and migration will become yet another polarised debate, dominated by those whose political interests conflict with protecting human rights in developing countries and taking meaningful action on climate change. In fact – as has been well documented – there is a concerning alignment of right wing politics with

¹ The Migration Observatory (2011). *Thinking Behind the Numbers: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration in Britain*. Oxford University: Oxford

climate change denial. Campaigns on climate change and migration will be taking place in a familiar political context, and the political right are likely to respond in predictable ways: by accusing refugee organisations of jumping on a fraudulent bandwagon to promote themselves; by suggesting that refugees are somehow to blame (there is a lot of potential for blaming the victims around climate change); or by using predictions of future displacement as arguments for tighter border controls (including controls over internal movement within EU).

However, there is a window of opportunity in which to minimise this risk. As the media research conducted for this briefing shows, reporting on climate change and migration is currently very limited. The language and terminology used to communicate about climate change and migration is not yet entrenched. This means there is a chance to shape the way that the climate change/migration debate develops – by using evidence-based principles for effective communication, developing key messages, and using appropriate terminology.

There is also a major opportunity for different sectors to work together and learn from each other. Environmental NGOs understand the political and

media landscape of climate change very well – but that does not mean that they are best placed to understand the most effective language and imagery to use for campaigning on human rights issues. Refugee and human rights organisations have 60 years experience of long-term international negotiations and legislative reform. Development organisations bring expertise in mobilising public and political support for action on international, geographically distant issues. However, climate change challenges many of the basic assumptions of the international development, refugee and human rights sectors and requires new thinking and approaches. The combined expertise of these groups is essential for approaching a complex issue like climate change and migration.

What is critical is that the full range of organisations involved in engaging the public on climate change, human rights and migrant/refugee issues begin the process of thinking about communication challenges as soon as possible. There is a huge amount to gain from getting ‘ahead of the curve’ and taking ownership of the issue using progressive language and ideas, a major opportunity to reach new audiences, and the chance to really impact on the way that climate

change is understood by policy makers and the public. For too long, climate change has been understood as primarily an environmental issue – but through the lens provided by a focus on migration and human rights, this could change.

In November 2011, a meeting of a subset of members of the UKCCMC convened to identify the most important challenges involved in communicating about climate change and migration. Five short follow-up interviews with members² of the UKCCMC were also conducted, and this briefing is a tool for addressing some of the most important challenges identified by the UKCCMC for communicating about climate change and migration to the general public, policy makers and other civil society organisations in the UK.

The briefing is in three parts – the first section briefly reviews the existing communications landscape in terms of climate change and migration, including a unique analysis by *The Carbon Brief* of media reporting on climate change and migration. The second section outlines general principles for effective communication about climate change and migration, and the third section focuses on the core messages of the UKCCMC.

² See endnotes for full list of participants

PART 1

CLIMATE CHANGE & MIGRATION

– THE EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE

The UKCCMC are at the forefront of communication about climate change and migration – and ideally placed to shape it in the future. Members of the Coalition and others have already started to talk about the issue, and unsurprisingly this is taking place in a range of different ways. From the focus on ‘climate refugees’ in the work of organisations like the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), to the identification and mapping of potential climate migrants by CARE International³, to the analyses presented in the recent UK Government Foresight report (2011)⁴, a small but growing body of research and activism on climate change and migration is starting to emerge.

Beyond reports and analyses of the problem, a handful of campaigns have begun taking the issue to the public by setting up mock ‘climate refugee’ camps in the streets. Although the exhibition in 2011 of ‘postcards from the future’⁵ (featuring images of refugee camps filling the streets around Buckingham Palace) was not a campaign to raise public awareness so much as an attempt by artists to visualise the impacts of

future climate change, it was both praised and criticised as an attempt to communicate about climate change and migration. And though most of the focus so far on climate change and migration has come from progressive organisations (like those represented in the UKCCMC), there have even been some attempts by the far-right to cynically capitalise on the link between climate change and migration, and push the idea that increased immigration would make it more difficult for the UK to meet its targets for reducing carbon emissions.

However, none of the major NGOs (such as Oxfam, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth) that might be expected to have a public position on the topic do in fact have one, and in research commissioned specially for this briefing, no evidence of extensive media reporting on the issue was found.

We commissioned the climate change media specialists, *The Carbon Brief*, to analyse the way that climate change and migration was reported between November 2010 – December 2011 in English language media, using

the search terms ‘climate refugees’, ‘climate migrants’, ‘environmental refugees’ and ‘environmental migrants’.

Coverage of the issue in the press was found to still be fairly marginal. 163 articles were identified, compared to over 18,000 articles during the same period that mentioned UK TV talent show ‘The X Factor’. The issue of climate migration was rarely reported spontaneously – the vast majority of coverage was linked to specific events. Several factors appear to have brought it to public attention over the past year, most notably the famine and drought in Somalia, the Durban climate summit and the UK Government Foresight report.

Although a handful of articles have focused on the threat of over-population due to a mass migration of people from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere, there is very little evidence of alarmism. This may be because there has been so little coverage overall – but this means that there is a genuine window of opportunity to pro-actively influence the media agenda.

³ CARE International (2008). *In search of shelter: mapping the effects of climate change on human migration and displacement*.

⁴ Foresight (2011): *Migration and Global Environmental Change*, The Government Office for Science

⁵ <http://www.postcardsfromthefuture.co.uk>

The opportunity for shaping how environmental migration is reported in the media can be contrasted with the way that the reporting of climate change has become highly polarised. Although in theory, the ‘facts’ of climate change science should be reported in a straightforward way by newspapers and television networks, considerable differences exist between the editorial lines taken by different media organisations about the reality and seriousness of climate change.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a strong relationship between the political perspective of a media organisation and its position on climate change. The website of the left-leaning UK newspaper the Guardian, for example, is known internationally as a hub of climate change and environmental reporting and opinion – and sceptical opinions are rarely found. In comparison, right leaning media (such as the US Wall Street Journal) are far more likely to carry sceptical opinion and editorials. Although it is difficult to establish cause and effect, media-generated controversy is often cited as a reason for public scepticism about climate change⁵.

Radio, television and newspaper reports have been criticised for interpreting the notion of providing a ‘balanced’ set of views too simplistically, which can lead to competing points of view on a scientific issue being presented

as equally supported when in fact they are not (the concept of ‘balance-as-bias’). A recent study of climate change reporting in the UK, US, Brazil, China, India & France found that more than 80% of the sceptical voices reported in the study were from UK & US papers – suggesting that scepticism about climate change in the media is to some extent an ‘Anglophone’ phenomenon⁶. In particular, organised lobbyists in the US and UK have proven adept at targeting the media, and free-market advocacy groups such as the Global Warming Policy Foundation have heavily promoted the idea that the science of climate change is too uncertain to warrant taking significant action – making ‘uncertainty’ a key frame for media reporting on climate change.

This brief overview of media reporting on climate change helps to explain the context in which reporting on climate change and migration will take place, once the media begin to take a closer interest. Ideas and frames that dominate early on – like uncertainty for climate change science – have a big impact on the way the debate develops in the media, and correspondingly on public opinion and what policy makers consider to be politically feasible and acceptable. Beginning the process of setting the terms of the debate – of framing it using progressive values and language – now, before other groups do, is critical.

⁶ Poortinga, W., Spence, A., Whitmarsh, L., Capstick, S. & Pidgeon, N. (2011). *Uncertain climate: An investigation into public scepticism about anthropogenic climate change*. *Global Environmental Change* 21, 1015–1024.

⁷ Painter, J. (2011). *Poles Apart: The international reporting of climate change scepticism*. Oxford University, Oxford: RSJ.



Spinning climate change as a security threat is likely to undermine, rather than strengthen, serious efforts to link climate change mitigation and adaptation to development efforts that reduce poverty and promote equity. Playing with fear is like playing with fire. You cannot be sure exactly where it will spread.

Betsy Hartmann, 2010

PART 2

FIVE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE & MIGRATION

This section describes five principles for effective communication about climate change and migration. The principles are listed first, and then explained in turn.

1. Explain climate change in the simplest possible way.

Don't let a message about migration or human rights be obscured by a complex explanation of climate science or by getting bogged down in debates about uncertainty. There are straightforward ways of explaining the problem – and helpful metaphors and analogies to draw on.

2. Avoid messaging based on fear or guilt, and try to minimise the 'psychological distance' between your campaign and your audience.

Don't talk about numbers, projections and abstract future scenarios – talk about concrete, tangible events and personal stories.

3. Focus on the medium as well as the message.

It matters *who* gives the message, as much as what is being said. Scepticism about climate change is to some extent an issue of trust in climate scientists – so using trustworthy sources and communicators is essential. Personal testimony – through the stories of those affected by climate change – is especially powerful. And campaign materials that encourage some kind of interaction or participation beyond signing a petition are likely to produce a deeper level of audience engagement.

4. Choose your words wisely.

Terms like 'migrant', 'refugee' and 'displaced person' might seem interchangeable, but in fact they have specific legal definitions and mean

very different things in the mind of the public. It is essential that anyone communicating about climate change and migration uses accurate and consistent terms: these core terms will define the debate.

5. Take ownership of the issue on your own terms and use the most powerful and effective frames.

The dominance of environmentalism and the use of environmental frames and images to communicate climate change is well established, and has meant that human rights and refugee organisations have historically seen it as outside of their domain. This is an opportunity to change that, and these are some of the best frames to use:

- a) Rights & Responsibilities
- b) Human Security
- c) Part of the Solution

1. EXPLAIN CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE SIMPLEST POSSIBLE WAY

On the basic question of whether the earth is warming, and whether human activity is causing this to happen, there is a clear and unambiguous consensus.⁷

Thermometers placed around the world show clearly that average global temperatures are increasing, and the only factor that can account for this rapid and unprecedented level of warming is the extra carbon in the atmosphere from burning coal, oil and gas. This has caused a layer of carbon to build up in the atmosphere that acts like a blanket, trapping the sun's light and heat, and increasing temperatures. This simple message should be at the heart of any climate change communication.

But while simplicity is important, **avoiding exaggeration** and **unfounded claims** is critical. Public scepticism about climate change is often driven by a perception that the scale of the problem has been exaggerated.⁸ Putting a definitive number on estimates

of people who will be affected by climate change is difficult, and from a migration perspective is important to avoid too: bickering about precise numbers with anti-immigration pressure groups is a time-consuming distraction.

On more specific questions about when, where and how soon the impacts of climate change will take place, there is still a great deal that is unknown. Just like any area of complex science, uncertainty is a feature of climate change that will never go away. Science doesn't deal in certainties – it weighs up the evidence and tells you which of several possible answers has the most support.

Being honest about this uncertainty is important: if people think that the science is being exaggerated, their trust will be lost. But words like 'uncertainty' have one meaning for scientists and another for everyone else. Scientists use this term to indicate the level of

confidence in their statements, but to most people uncertainty equals ignorance, and the danger is that in being honest about uncertainty in climate science, communicators over-focus on it.

One way to deal with uncertainty is to talk about climate change uncertainties as risks.⁹ Although this might not seem a major difference, framing the issue as being about risk (rather than a set of 'uncertain' predictions about the future) turns the problem into something that most people are used to dealing with: perceiving and managing risks. Risk is the language of the insurance, health and national security sectors, whereas uncertainty implies a lack of confidence or knowledge. Most people are comfortable with the idea that house insurance is needed to protect against the risk of a fire – even though the chance of their house burning down is much less than the risk that climate change will have dangerous effects.

⁸ http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html

⁹ Whitmarsh, L. (2011). *Scepticism and uncertainty about climate change: dimensions, determinants and change over time*. *Global Environmental Change*, 21, 690–700.

¹⁰ Pidgeon, N.F and Fischhoff, B. (2011). *The role of social and decision sciences in communicating uncertain climate risks*. *Nature Climate Change*, 1, 35–41.

A good example of applying a risk (rather than an uncertainty) framing is in describing the relationship between extreme weather events and climate change. All weather events are now influenced by climate change because all weather now develops against a background of a changing climate. As the world has warmed, some types of extreme weather have become more frequent and severe in recent decades, with increases in extreme heat, intense rainfall, and drought. Heat waves are longer and hotter, while heavy rains and flooding are more frequent.

But that doesn't mean that it is possible to say that a given weather event has been 'caused' by climate change. A simple analogy that helps to communicate how climate change and extreme weather events are related is that of a person who has problems with their immune system:

the risk that they will get ill more often increases, but any particular illness is likely to be due to a number of other causes. Another simple way of describing how climate change is related to extreme weather (and one that fits with a 'risk' rather than an 'uncertainty' framing) is to talk about climate change 'loading the dice' or 'changing the odds' of extreme weather events occurring.¹⁰ And while there will always be uncertainty about exactly where and when particular climate impacts will take place, it is important to emphasise just how strong the level of consensus is among climate scientists that human-caused climate change is a reality. Although bodies like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change may have suffered from some bad publicity over the past few years, the science-base for climate change remains absolutely solid.

¹⁰ <http://climatecommunication.org/new/articles/extreme-weather/overview>

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE

<http://talkingclimate.org>

COIN project which acts as the gateway to research on climate change communication

www.climatecommunication.org

US website that presents climate science in a straightforward way

<http://www.carbonbrief.org/profiles/what-we-know-and-what-we-dont>

Climate change media specialists on what we know – and don't know – about climate change

2. AVOID MESSAGING BASED ON FEAR OF GUILT

– MINIMISE THE ‘PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN YOUR CAMPAIGN AND YOUR AUDIENCE

For most people, climate change is a future threat – not here and not now. Lots of early climate change campaigns sought to address this by emphasising the disastrous consequences that unchecked climate change would have on humans and the natural world. Images of burning globes, stranded polar bears and famine-ridden African landscapes characterised a great deal of initial climate change campaigns.

There is no merit in ‘dumbing down’ the scientific evidence that the impacts of climate change are likely to be severe, and that some of these impacts are now unavoidable. Accepting that climate change is happening is a scary prospect. But research has shown that deliberate attempts to instil fear or guilt in people carry a considerable risk of backfiring – and this work is directly relevant for climate change and migration campaigns.

While fear of a negative outcome (e.g.

lung cancer) *can* be an effective way of promoting behavioural changes (e.g. giving up smoking), the link between the threat and the behaviour must be personal and direct.¹¹ For those who do not yet realise the potentially ‘scary’ aspects of climate change, people need to first experience themselves as vulnerable to the risks in some way in order to feel moved or affected. Typically, climate change is perceived as neither a direct nor a personal threat – and the risk of displacement due to climate change is a threat the majority of the UK population are unlikely to face soon.

Simply cranking up the ‘fear factor’ is unlikely to engage people,¹² and language that could be construed as alarmist also risks undermining campaigns to combat public misperceptions of migrants as a threat. The danger is that fear can also be disempowering – producing feelings of helplessness, remoteness and lack of control. The right kind of

fear-based message is “We know this is scary and overwhelming, but many of us feel this way and we are doing something about it”.

But this leaves an obvious question for communicating about climate change and migration – how can the issue be made more relevant to UK audiences, given that many campaigns are inevitably focused on people in far away nations? That is, how can the ‘psychological distance’ between your campaign and your audience be reduced?

Studies have found that if people who have experienced an event – for example flooding – that is representative of climate change, then the ‘psychological distance’ between that person and climate change is reduced.¹³ British citizens who have experienced flooding are more likely to express concern about climate change and show a greater willingness to save energy. So linking

individual experiences with climate change is one way of increasing the chance that people will want to do something about it.

Although this research didn’t focus on climate-migration issues, the lesson is clear: look for ways of linking the personal (lived) experiences of your UK audience with the personal stories of individuals and communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

¹² Das, de Wit, Stroebe (2003). *Fear Appeals Motivate Acceptance of Action Recommendations: Evidence for a Positive Bias in the Processing of Persuasive Messages*. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 650–664; Hoog, N., Stroebe, W., & de Wit, J. B. F. (2005). *The impact of Fear Appeals on processing and acceptance of action recommendations*. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 31, 24–33.

¹³ O’Neill, S. & Nicholson-Cole, S. (2009). “*Fear Won’t Do It*”: *Promoting Positive Engagement With Climate Change Through Visual and Iconic Representations*. *Science Communication* 30, 355–379.

¹⁴ Spence, A., Poortinga, W., Butler, C. & Pidgeon, N. (2011). *Perceptions of climate change and willingness to save energy related to flood experience*. *Nature Climate Change*, 1(1) 46–49.

3. FOCUS ON THE MEDIUM AS WELL AS THE MESSAGE

One of the issues that has dogged climate change communication is how to make it more human. Having developed in the public eye as an ‘environmental’ issue, the toolbox of climate change communication has tended to be filled with images and words that reflect a framing of climate change as a fundamentally environmental problem.

The relationship between climate change and migration offers an opportunity to change this, and one of the most powerful methods that human rights, refugee and migrant organisations have at their disposal is the personal testimony of the individuals and communities they campaign to protect and empower. Using real-life stories about individual people is much more powerful than using predictions about the number of people climate change will affect. But beyond ensuring that the method of getting information across to UK audiences is as effective as possible, there is also a question about whether public engagement is a one-way or a more participatory process. The major anti-poverty campaign *Make Poverty History* was critiqued

in the major report ‘Finding Frames’ as reinforcing a way of viewing global poverty that obscured its more fundamental, structural causes.¹⁴ In promoting the idea that the appropriate role for a UK citizen in considering global poverty is to wear a wristband and donate a small amount of money, *Make Poverty History* (and other campaigns in a similar style) are using a strong framing of the problem: that ending poverty is about a ‘transaction’ rather than a ‘transformation’.

Campaign materials that aim for a very superficial level of engagement (e.g., ‘clicktivism’ campaigns to email political decision-makers) may reinforce a ‘transaction’ frame with the public as passive supporters, whereas models of communication that are based on genuine dialogue, or some kind of meaningful interaction, are more likely to produce a deeper level of engagement with the issue.

In a recent issue of the journal *Climatic Change*, Professor John Sterman argued that effectively communicating climate change requires different modes of

communication, including learning environments such as interactive simulations where people can ‘see’ for themselves what happens when (for example) levels of carbon dioxide increase in the atmosphere. But this logic could equally be applied to campaigns that seek to engage people with the human face of climate change – finding ways of letting people ‘experience’ climate change and migration rather than just be told about it.

Some research has looked specifically at the effect of using different images to represent climate change on public concern and perceptions. In a paper assessing how climate change has been visually represented ‘beyond polar bears’, Kate Manzo suggested that the safest options were those that connected with the audience on a personal level, and demonstrated positive mitigation or adaptation actions. Linking personal stories of individuals in developing countries with images of them taking positive adaptive steps as a response to climate change is likely to be more effective in engaging UK audiences than trying to guilt-trip them with pictures of

‘drowning’ polar bears. And finally, although the communication tools of scientists (like temperature graphs) are often of little help in increasing public engagement with climate change, they are (in general) highly trusted members of society. Public scepticism about climate change is partly driven by a perception that the scale of the problem has been exaggerated¹⁵, and some research has suggested that climate scientists are less trusted than they used to be. However, it is worth bearing in mind that although media commentators and climate sceptic groups reacted loudly to accidental mistakes in the IPCC reports, and the release of emails from the University of East Anglia, there is little evidence that these events impacted much on public opinion.¹⁶ Used in an appropriate way – for example by pairing statements about scientific evidence with images of individual scientists, in order to increase the personal connection with the information – scientists are still trusted sources of information, and can enhance the credibility of your campaign message.

¹⁵ Darnton, A. (2011). *Finding Frames: New ways to engage the public in global poverty*. Bond: London, UK.

¹⁶ Whitmarsh, L. (2011). *Scepticism and uncertainty about climate change: dimensions, determinants and change over time*. *Global Environmental Change*, 21, 690–700.

¹⁷ <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn21289-climate-change-drops-off-hot-topic-list.html>

4. CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY

A key issue facing those who communicate about climate change and migration is whether particular terms are a help or a hindrance. Some environmental campaigners have used the prospect of environmental ‘refugees’ as an argument for urgent action on climate change.¹⁷ Some migration experts, on the other hand, have expressed their concern about a potential backlash against migrants and misuse of terms like ‘refugee’ if migration is portrayed as a solely negative outcome of climate change¹⁸ (when in fact the relationship is much more complex).

It is critical that communication about climate change and migration is politically sensitive and legally accurate, and there are several reasons why the word ‘refugee’ is particularly problematic. It has a strict technical definition under the Geneva Convention (1951), and so any attempt to extend its definition to new groups risks undermining the existing protection it offers vulnerable people. It also does not acknowledge

that migration can occur as a positive, adaptive response to climate change, and it cannot be applied to the movement of people within countries.

But other terms may be problematic for different reasons – referring to climate migrants is not contentious legally, but implies that people have moved voluntarily, rather than against their will, and this may not always be the case. The UK Government report *Migration & Global Environmental Change* argued that it was simply not possible to define a group of ‘environmental migrants’, let alone a group of environmental migrants linked specifically to human-caused climate change (although clearly, climate change is ‘game-changer’ in terms of loading the dice for more extreme weather events – see Box 1)¹⁹

‘Survival migrant’ is a term coined by the academic Alexander Betts to describe people who have left their country of origin because of an existential threat over which they have no domestic remedy (which

clearly includes, but is not limited to, climate change).²⁰

The advantage of this term is that ‘survival’ rather than ‘climate change’ is the central focus – meaning that questions about whether migration is caused by climate change or one of a number of other factors become less important. What matters is whether someone’s survival is threatened, not the determining cause of migration.

The movement of people in response to environmental changes will take place in a range of ways and for a variety of reasons – voluntary or forced, within and between national borders, and because of rapid or slow-onset changes. It is difficult to identify one single term that captures this diversity. To help ensure there is clarity about what core terms mean in different sectors a climate change and migration glossary is included as an appendix.

¹⁸ EJF (2009). *No Place Like Home – Where next for climate refugees?* Environmental Justice Foundation: London.

¹⁹ Martin, S. (2010). *Climate change, migration and governance*. *Global Governance* 16, 397-414.

²⁰ Foresight (2011). *Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities*. UK Government: Foresight.

²¹ Betts, A. (2010). *Survival Migration: A new Protection Framework*. *Global Governance* 16, 361-382.

5. TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE ISSUE

USE THE MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE PROGRESSIVE FRAMES

Whenever information is communicated it is always framed in some way. A frame refers to the language, ideas and concepts that lie behind a message, and there are many different ways of framing the same information. There has been a lot of interest in applying research about framing to climate change campaigns, public engagement with global poverty, and more broadly to civil society organisations that work on ‘bigger than self’ problems (that is, problems that may not be in an individual’s immediate self-interest to invest energy and resources in helping to solve). Preventing the effects of dangerous climate change and protecting the rights of those at risk of displacement through environmental change clearly fall into the category of ‘bigger than self’ issues – and so understanding the implications of message framing is essential for communicating effectively.

Framing a message typically means speaking to different sets of *values*. Anti-immigration campaigners have been very effective at framing the issue of migration as a *threat*

to national security, or in terms of an *out-group threatening existing cultural identities*. The values that these campaigns speak to relate to self-protection, and fit into the group of values that psychologists call ‘self-enhancing’.

There is now a major body of social psychological research that has examined the types of personal values that people hold. Based on extensive empirical research in over 60 nations and across several decades, it is now accepted that certain values tend to be opposed to each other.²¹ In particular, individuals who identify strongly with ‘self-enhancing’ values (e.g. materialism, personal ambition, power) tend not to identify strongly with ‘self-transcending’ values (e.g. benevolence, respect for the environment). Although most people identify with a range of values to some extent, talking to one set of values tends to diminish the importance of other values. Any civil society organisation working on ‘bigger than self’ issues is ultimately dependent on the level of self-transcending values in society – so

it is not in their long term interest to promote self-enhancing values. But environmental and development campaigns have come under criticism for (often unintentionally) promoting self-enhancing values. A campaign to protect an area of woodland, for example, could promote forest conservation using an economic argument, and emphasising the monetary value of the forest might well help to conserve it. But in reinforcing self-enhancing values, it may also undermine the broader goals of campaigns against deforestation and any other organisation that works on ‘bigger than self’ problems. Any organisation engaged in campaigning on bigger-than-self issues should invest time in finding a ‘common cause’ for framing their messages that embodies self-transcending values.²²

There are a range of ways of framing the issue (or multiple issues) of climate change and migration, which have already begun to surface in campaign materials and media reporting. Here’s how to use these different frames in the most effective way – and the pitfalls to watch out for.

²² Crompton, T. & Kasser, T. (2010). *Meeting environmental challenges: The role of human identity*.

WWF UK. http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigning/strategies_for_change/?uNewsID=3105

²³ Crompton, T. (2010). *Common Cause: The case for working with our cultural values*. WWF UK, Surrey.

a) Human Rights & Human Responsibilities

Although there is a clear relationship between climate change and human migration, it is a complex one. In addition to the complexity and uncertainty inherent in climate science, establishing direct causation is tricky (and in many situations likely to be impossible.) Fighting for support for vulnerable populations requires demonstrating that they are at risk – but in most cases, climate change is one or two steps removed from the actual threat facing people. For example, climatic changes might make rainfall unreliable, leading to lower crop yields – but it is the falling crop yields that will eventually drive people to move.

Climate change loads the dice, but there is usually a more immediate cause to point to when populations are displaced. Furthermore, climate or environmental stressors are rarely, if ever, the only factor affecting migration decisions or outcomes. The critical issue is whether human rights are being violated, not the cause of that violation – so framing climate-induced migration as a **human rights** violation rather than an **environmental** issue could be a more effective strategy.

Rights and responsibilities are a universal concept. Using the idea that climate change is everyone's responsibility to deal with, and that being forced to migrate because of climate change is a human rights violation, is a frame that promotes the ideas of **empathy** and **solidarity**. Using a human rights frame also follows straightforwardly from the term 'survival migrant' (described in the previous section), where the focus is on survival and human rights (rather than having to prove a link between a particular climatic impact and a group of migrants) as the criteria for assessing vulnerability. Using a rights and responsibilities frame means relying on self-transcendence values such as **fairness** and **justice** – the **moral obligation** to protect human rights is a much stronger social norm than protecting the environment (which is something only a proportion of people include in their self-identity).

The trick is to apply a 'responsibility' frame without using guilt-based appeals – so the responsibility must be 'ours' (an inclusive term) rather than 'yours' (implying blame).



Few areas of public policy are subject to greater misrepresentation in public and political discourse, yet more influenced by public opinion ...Communicating effectively about migration is critical since managing migration also implies managing how migrants are perceived in society.

World Migration Report, 2011

b) Human security (not national security)

Security is a complex frame because it has several different meanings. Presenting migrants (and refugees) as a **threat** to personal security and existing cultural identities is a tactic that anti-immigration and nationalist advocacy groups have perfected (along with the right-wing media). This type of security framing promotes **strongly self-enhancing** values, encouraging a very inward-looking perspective, fear of outsiders, and a nationalistic attitude. Recent psychological research found that people who endorse this type of self-serving security as a value tend to also support **military action, be prejudiced towards people unlike themselves, and be less politically engaged.**²³

This is not a progressive frame for promoting engagement with climate change migration – and while no progressive organisation would explicitly present climate-migration in this way, there is a danger that a focus on migration as a negative impact of climate change could unintentionally promote this framing of the issue. For

example, Betsy Hartmann traces the development of a security narrative around environmental migration back to the end of the cold war. As the perceived threat of Communism faded into the background, other issues took prominence, and as the demand for energy, land and water increased globally, the ‘threat’ of refugees produced by population growth and scarcity of resources was promoted by governments and NGOs alike, drawing on the “deep-seated fears and stereotypes of the dark-skinned, over-breeding, dangerous poor”.²⁴

Unless communications are carefully tailored, presenting migration alongside negative climate impacts such as rising sea-levels or extreme weather events implies that migration is a threat to be frightened of. **This is the wrong type of security framing.**

However, there is another way of thinking about security – in relation to the rights, safety and wellbeing of vulnerable populations. Using **security** to motivate **concern** about vulnerable

groups is very different to using **security** to whip up fear about the **threat** of an invading out-group. So how can a security frame be used in the right way?

A report by the campaign group Platform and the Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC)²⁵ argued that although ‘energy security’ could be a problematic frame for increasing public engagement with climate change, there was also scope to approach the issue in a way that was more compatible with progressive values. Security can also relate to populations **vulnerable** to the impacts of climate change, to **conserving and protecting nature**, or to the need to shift rapidly to an energy system based on **renewables** to increase security of supply. This alternative security framing could play an important part in developing a progressive communication strategy for climate change and migration – but it must be clear that the ‘security’ in question is not the self-serving type.

²⁴ Cohrs, JC, Moschner, B., Maes, J. & Kielmann, S. (2005). *Personal values and attitudes toward war*. Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 11, 293-312; Vala, J., Pereira, C., & Ramos, A. (2006) *Racial prejudice, threat perception and opposition to immigration: A comparative analysis*. Portuguese Journal of Social Science, 5 (2) 119-140

²⁵ Hartmann, B (2010). *Rethinking climate refugees and climate conflict: Rhetoric, reality and the politics of policy discourse*. J. Int. Dev. 22, 233–246

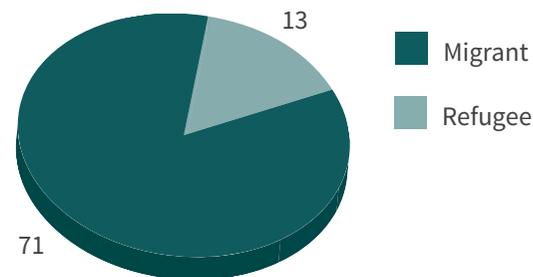
²⁶ Platform & the Public Interest Research Centre (2012). *Energy Security: A toxic frame for progressives?* Forthcoming

The PIRC report suggests that while many of the underlying concepts that the ‘right’ type of security framing embodies are suitable for progressive campaigning – **justice, interdependence, concern for vulnerable populations and the right to be free from harm** – the term ‘security’ itself should be avoided, as the associations with negative values are too strong. So the key to using the security frame successfully is to use ‘human security’ as an organising principle, but not to use the term itself prominently.

The media research conducted for this briefing found that there is not yet a dominant frame in media reporting of climate change and migration. Certain framings were, however, linked predominantly to particular terminology. Use of the word ‘security’ was commonly associated with articles that described ‘refugees’, much less so with articles that talked about ‘migrants’.

Looking more closely at the articles that used a security framing, approximately half used a ‘human security’ framing (i.e. food and water security, safety and welfare

of vulnerable populations) the other half used a ‘national security’ framing (i.e. potential for conflict, border protection and threats from ‘outsiders’), with an equal split for both the ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’ search terms. These results suggest that – in the same way that there is not yet a dominant media frame for reporting about climate change and migration – the security frame has not yet become strongly associated with one particular set of values. This means that there is a genuine window of opportunity for pro-actively influencing the language and framing of climate change and migration in the media.



Mentions of the word ‘security’



Climate communications has been an absolute disaster. We have the strongest and most compelling arguments of any issue and yet we have never used the right words to inspire or motivate people.

George Monbiot, journalist and campaigner, 2011

c) Part of the solution

There are a range of ‘positive’ ways of framing the relationship between climate change and migration. This does not mean dismissing the very real dangers that people in at-risk areas face, but it does mean talking about climate-induced migration as part of the ‘solution’ rather than as part as the problem. A frame in which migration is part of the solution starts from the position that migration is not inherently a bad thing. It becomes problematic when it is forced, and causes harm, but this harm can be minimised by planning and working pro-actively with vulnerable communities.

This framing is positive in the sense that it recognises the pros as well as the cons of migration, but also in the sense that it promotes agency for the people who are migrating. This approach would not be appropriate for situations where migration is forced or involuntary. But if it is used to promote rapid action to *prevent* forced

migration, then it may still be a useful frame.

The risk of pursuing this frame is that it may depoliticise a fundamentally political issue into a ‘safe’ space, from where it is impossible to advocate. Using this frame in an effective way means promoting migration as part of the solution while simultaneously highlighting the very real threats that vulnerable populations face (by using the concepts embodied in ‘human security’, but without positioning migrants as a security threat – see above).

How can migration be framed as part of the solution? Human populations have always been in flux, and the challenge (as with other impacts of climate change) is to **manage the risks effectively** through forward planning. The future will hold many **challenges**, of which this is one, and the best way of **managing** it is by building **resilience**. Taking a pro-

active approach to anticipating the climate-related risks that vulnerable populations will face, and working collaboratively with these groups to plan and make decisions will increase resilience to climate change. For example, one family member migrating for work to supplement a subsistence income could provide a valuable contribution to food security, allowing the family to remain in their current location (if, indeed, they wanted to).

Many impacts of climate change are now unavoidable – but the harm they cause is **not inevitable** if **urgent** and **effective adaptation** is put into place, supported by **solidarity** between **citizens** of different nations, who all face a **shared challenge**. This kind of language – and the framing it embodies – speaks to strongly self-transcending values of **kindness, benevolence, and empathy**.

PART 3 | KEY MESSAGES AND CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE UKCCMC

Please note that the following key messages are a guide for good communications only. They do not represent campaign messages but rather core concepts we believe it is important to build into a wider communications plan.

There is a strong tendency to see climate change as a long term risk, communicators must make it clear that climate change is real, not a theory and is happening **now**.

It is important in your communications to recognise a linkage rather than direct causality. Climate change will rarely, if ever, be the sole driver of displacement.

It is important to acknowledge the complexity of issue. However communicators must talk to certainty as much as they can. Use of testimonies and personal stories may aid this process. Policy makers need to know what we can say not what we can't.

Regardless of our actions now, we are **already committed** to major alterations in weather patterns that carry the risk of human displacement. In the last decade, disasters have doubled from 200 to 400 per year. Likewise, displacement **linked** to slower changes such as prolonged drought or sea level rise is of escalating concern. The resettlement of people away from high-risk areas or for mitigation projects carries serious human rights implications. Though climate change is now to some extent irreversible, we are not committed to the human suffering or displacement that may result.

Environmental migration is a **complex phenomenon**. We must understand the impact that climate or environmental stress has on

an individual or a community as determined equally by local politico-economic, social, and institutional context. Unless we resolve to understand local realities, we will fail to support people effectively.

One of the most important **strategies** we have to respond to the risk of displacement is migration. Migration has been a vital livelihood strategy for hundreds of years. In the face of slow onset environmental change, it may be critical to survival. There is a danger that we lock people into ever-worsening conditions. Migration should be one of a range of adaptation options available. **Everyone should have a right to stay but equally the choice to move to areas where they can live a sustainable existence.**

Communicators should speak of migration as a legitimate adaptation strategy and as part of the solution to potential displacement.

It is essential that communicators convey a sense of choice. The right to choose will be an essential criterion of whether or not migration strategies work for the benefit of affected communities.

Supporting people to strengthen their survival capacity through migration will be a vital component of individual and collective strategies to combat climate change. For this to work we need enabling policies and institutions. Migration can increase people's adaptive capacity but resilience will not be realised unless we reduce exploitation, protect migrants' rights and ensure people can claim a fair share of the wealth they help create. This will require a significant shift away from attitudes and policies which aim to discourage migration.

Above all else **climate change is a human rights issue**. Everyone has the right to dignity, life, health, food, shelter and movement.

In many ways, climate change is the ultimate injustice. It is caused by the emissions of the world's industrialised nations but has its greatest impacts on the people who are already most vulnerable. Unlike other human rights concerns, we cannot escape a level of responsibility for the crisis. Climate change is not a force of nature. It is the result of the emissions we have produced and way we have chosen to live. Conversely, this gives us greater power than ever to change things.

It is important to avoid an 'us' and 'them' narrative. Building a sense of solidarity and empathy requires communicators to appeal to a sense of common identity and universal rights.

This phrase needs constant reiteration to break open the limitations of 20 years of defining climate change as solely an 'environmental' issue.

MIGRATION GLOSSARY

Human Mobility The ability of individuals, families or groups of people to choose their place of residence. (Foresight, 2011)

Migration The process of an individual or group changing their place of residence either by crossing an international border (international migration) or by moving within their country of origin to another region (internal migration). People are normally considered to be 'migrants' if they remain outside their original place of residence for a period of at least 3 months. (IOM)

Migrant There is no universally accepted definition of the term "migrant". It is usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of "personal convenience" and without intervention of any coercive external factors. (UNHCR)

Environmental migrant No consensus definition exists. However, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) define environmental migrants as: persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad. (IOM, 2007)

Survival migrant People who have left their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no domestic remedy. (Betts, 2010)

Irregular migration Cross border flows of people who enter a country without that country's legal permission to do so. (COMPAS, 2011)

Remittances Monies earned or acquired by migrants that are sent back to their country of origin.

Asylum seeker An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee in such countries is initially an asylum-seeker (UNHCR)

Refugee A person who meets the eligibility criteria in the refugee definition provided by relevant international or regional refugee instruments, UNHCR's mandate, and/or national legislation. According to many of these instruments, a refugee is a person who cannot return to his/her country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of persecution or serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity or freedom. (UNHCR) (see the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 as amended by the 1967 Protocol, the Cartagena Declaration and the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa).

Stateless person A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. As such, a stateless person lacks those rights attributable to nationality. (Art. 1, UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954)

Internally displaced person (IDP)

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. (1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Introduction, para. 2)

Displacement

A forced removal of a person from his/her home or country, often due to of armed conflict, development or natural disasters. (IOM, 2011)

Forced migration

A general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects. (IASFM)

Mixed flows

Complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other grants. (IOM, 2011)

Involuntary displacement (development sector)

Involuntary displacement occurs when the decision of moving is made and imposed by an external agent and when there is no possibility to stay. Involuntary displacement can be caused by environmental degradation, natural disasters, conflicts or development projects. It is associated with loss of housing, shelter, income, land, livelihoods, assets, access to resources and services, among others. (World Bank)

Resettlement (development sector)

Resettlement is a process to assist the displaced persons to replace their housing, assets, livelihoods, land, access to resources and services and to restore their socio-economic and cultural conditions. (World Bank)

Resettlement (humanitarian sector)

The settlement of ex-combatants in locations within their country of origin or to a third country as part of DDR Programmes. (DDR stands for disarm, demobilize and reintegrate). (WHO)

Resettlement (refugee sector)

The selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country. The UNHCR advocate limiting the application of the terminology to refugees as defined in the Geneva Convention. (UNHCR)

Relocation

Relocation includes both: a) Temporary relocation: the act of moving evacuated people to a place where they stay until return or settlement elsewhere in the country becomes possible; or b) Permanent relocation: the act of moving people to another location in the country and settling them when they no longer can return to their homes or place of habitual residence. Relocations can be voluntary or forced. (OCHA)

International protection

It is, first and foremost, the responsibility of States to protect their citizens. When governments are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens, individuals may suffer such serious violations of their personal rights that they are willing to leave their homes, their friends, maybe even some of their family, to seek safety in another country. Since, by definition, the basic rights of refugees are no longer protected by the governments of their home countries, the international community then assumes the responsibility of ensuring that those basic rights are respected. The phrase “international protection” covers the gamut of activities through which refugees’ rights are secured. (UNHCR)

Protection

A concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation (OCHA)

Complementary protection

The protection afforded by States to persons who need international protection but fall outside the legal definition of a refugee in article 1A(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Human rights law has extended States' international protection obligations beyond the Refugee Convention, preventing States from removing individuals who would be at risk of serious harm if returned to their countries of origin. (UNHCR)

Temporary protection

A device developed by States to offer protection of a temporary nature to persons arriving en masse from situations of conflict or generalised violence, without prior individual status determination. (UNHCR)

Durable solution

Any means by which the situation of refugees can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved to enable them to live normal lives. UNHCR traditionally pursues the durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement (UNHCR)

Non-Refoulement

A core principle of refugee law and extended in human rights law that prohibits States from returning refugees in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened. The principle of non-refoulement is a part of customary international law and is therefore binding on all States, whether or not they are parties to the 1951 Convention.

1951 Geneva Convention

A convention that establishes the most widely applicable framework for the protection of refugees. To date, there are 137 States who are parties to the 1951 Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol.

1998 IDP Guidelines

A series of non-binding principles that articulates standards for protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons. The Guiding Principles were presented to the Commission on Human Rights by the Representative of the Secretary General for Internally Displaced Persons in April 1998.

Humanitarian Assistance

Aid provided to address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This may include food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, seeds and tools, as well as the provision of infrastructure, such as schools and roads. "Humanitarian assistance" refers to assistance provided by humanitarian organizations for humanitarian purposes (i.e., non-political, non-commercial, and non-military purposes). (WHO) In UNHCR practice, assistance supports and complements the achievement of protection objectives. (UNHCR)

Disaster

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. (UNISDR)

Disaster risk management (DRM)

The systematic process of using administrative directives, organizations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster. (UNISDR)

Disaster risk reduction (DRR)

The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events. (UNISDR)

Natural hazard

Natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage. (UNISDR)

The Hyogo Framework for Action

A ten year global action plan for disaster risk reduction 2005–2015. Adopted by 168 governments Hyogo is a commitment to take action to reduce disaster risk and reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards.

IASC Guidelines

Operational Guidelines and Field Manual on Human Rights Protection in Situations of Natural Disaster

The UN cluster approach

A cluster is a group of agencies that gather to work together towards common objectives within a particular sector of emergency response. The cluster approach was instituted in 2006 as part of the UN Humanitarian Reform process. It's an important step on the road to more effective humanitarian coordination. At the global level, clusters have been established in 11 key areas to support the cluster approach. The global cluster leads report to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. (WHO)

Human Rights

Agreed international standards that recognise and protect the dignity and integrity of every individual, without any distinction. Human rights form part of customary international law and are stipulated in a variety of national, regional and international legal documents generally referred to as human rights instruments. The most prominent of these are the United Nations Charter, and the UN Bill 129

Fundamental Human Rights

Within the large scope of human rights, some human rights are claimed to be of particular significance. Support for this view comes from the non-derogability of some rights. Art. 4(1), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, permits derogation in time of public emergency threatening the life of the nation but prohibits any derogation from Arts. 6 (right to life), 7 (torture), 8(1) and (2) (slavery and servitude), 11 (imprisonment for breach of contractual obligation), 15 (retroactive criminal liability), 16 (recognition as a person in law) and 18 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion). This notwithstanding, the trend is to regard all human rights as universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, to be treated in fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. (OHCHR)

Sustainable livelihood

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base. (FAO)

Human Security

A concept concerned with the security of individuals and promoting the protection of individuals' physical safety, economic and social well-being, human dignity, and human rights and fundamental freedoms. It reflects the growing recognition worldwide that concepts of security must include people as well as States. (OCHA)

Millennium Development Goals

A set of poverty reduction targets for reducing absolute poverty levels, increasing primary school enrolment rates, reducing environmental degradation etc. by 2015. The MDGs will likely be replaced by Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

Poverty Reduction Strategies are prepared by developing country governments in collaboration with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as well as civil society and development partners. These documents describe the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing. (IMF)

Adaptation

Is a process by which strategies to moderate, cope with and take advantage of the consequences of climatic events are enhanced, developed, and implemented. (UNFCCC)

Adaptive capacity

No universal definition exists though adaptive capacity usually relates to the ability to maintain (and even improve) your well-being in the face of change – whatever that change may be.

Resilience

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to 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. (UNISDR)

Cancun Adaptation Framework

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF) as part of the Cancun Agreements at the 2010 Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico (COP 16).

National Adaptation Plans of Action

Documents prepared by least developed countries (LDCs) identifying urgent and immediate activities useful for coping with climate change. The NAPAs are then presented to the international donor community for support. (UNFCCC)

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