CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORCED MIGRATION HOTSPOTS

From Humanitarian Response to Area-wide Adaptation

Bonn Climate Talks

6 April 2009

Jean-François Durieux

Deputy Director

Division of Operational Services

UNHCR HQs

durieux@unhcr.org

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Extreme Climatic Events and Refugee Operations

- Many refugee emergencies develop in border areas that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, due to their geographic location, general prevailing conditions (e.g. poverty, over-population) or relative isolation from political decision-making
- Refugees are also affected by extreme climatic events
- Can a lose-lose situation be turned into a win-win?

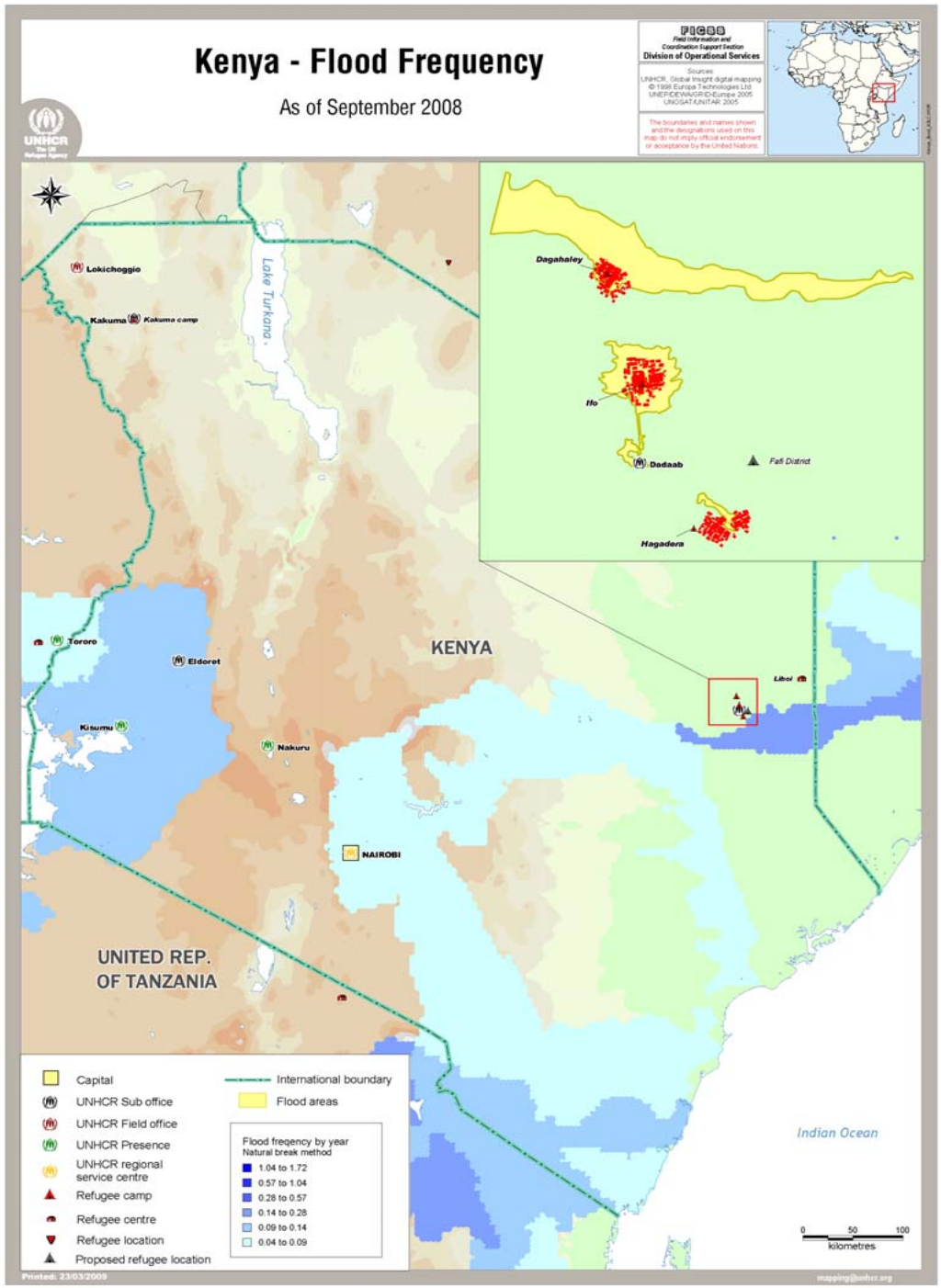
The Case of Dadaab Refugee Camps in Northern Kenya

Dadaab Refugee Camps

- Population – 235,455 refugees (Dec. 2008) in the camps and 160,000 residents in Dadaab town
- The camps were initially designed for 90,000
- 5,000 new arrivals per month in average in 2008
- Congestion, limited water availability, stretched sanitation system, health hazards
- Situated in the flood plain

Kenya - Flood Frequency

As of September 2008



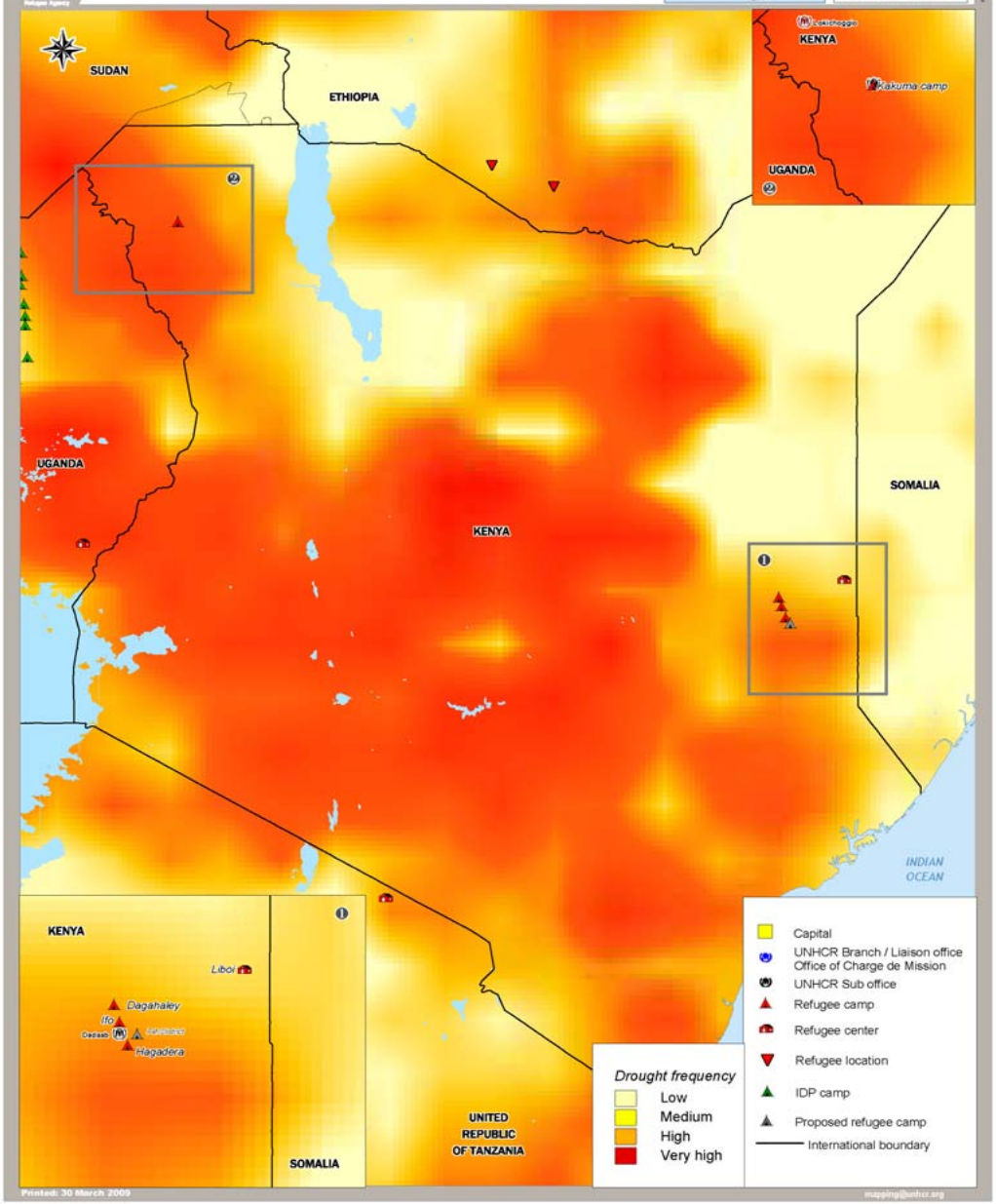
Kenya - Drought frequency

As of August 2008

FIGSS
Field Information and Coordination Support Section
Division of Operational Services

Sources:
UNHCR, Global Insight digital mapping
© 1999 Europa Technologies Ltd
UNEP, GRID-Europe / Drought frequency between 1980 and 2001

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Printed: 30 March 2009

mapping@unhcr.org

Floods in Dadaab

- Climate – Harsh, average temperature above 40 degrees
- Frequently flooded (1997, 2006)
- In 2006, two people killed, 78,000 uprooted, latrines overflowed, UNHCR operations disrupted
- A number of cases of fever, eye and skin infections, diarrhea reported

Flood in 2006 – Dadaab

Flood in 2006 – Dadaab

Planned Relocation from Dadaab to new site

- Relocation is planned for up to 120,000 people to de-congest the existing camps and to accommodate new arrivals
- The new settlements are to promote
  - co-existence by having common communal infrastructure (e.g. market place, slaughter house, sports facilities)
  - community development approach (e.g. inclusion of the area in development planning process)
  - environmentally sound planning and practice (e.g. environment impact assessment, energy efficient stoves, alternative energy)

Co-Development and Co-Existence in Dadaab

- The host community is involved in planning and reaps the benefits of
  - Education and health services
  - Improved livelihoods
  - Managed resources (water; livestock; etc.)
  - Climate change adaptation
- Refugee presence attracts international assistance and contributes to development in the area

The Case of Refugee Settlements in Teknaf, South East Bangladesh

Teknaf, South East Bangladesh

- 9,000 unregistered refugees in a makeshift camp on the bank of the Naf River

- Refugee shacks were on muddy ground – vulnerable to flooding, cyclones, high tides

Bangladesh - Flood Frequency

As of September 2008

FIGSS
Field Information and Coordination Support Section
Division of Operational Services

Sources:
UNHCR, Global Insight digital mapping
© 1998 Europa Technologies Ltd
UNEP/DEWA/GRID-Europe 2005

Capital
UNHCR Regional office
UNHCR Sub office
UNHCR Field office
UNHCR Presence
Refugee camp
Refugee transit center
International boundary

Elevation
(Above mean sea level)
3,250 to 4,000 metres
2,500 to 3,250 metres
1,750 to 2,500 metres
1,000 to 1,750 metres
750 to 1,000 metres
500 to 750 metres
250 to 500 metres
0 to 250 metres
Below mean sea level

NEPAL
BHUTAN
MYANMAR
INDIA
BANGLADESH
DHAKA
INDIA
BANGLADESH
MYANMAR
Cox's Bazar
Kutupalong
Nayapara

Flood frequency
Average event per Year
1.04 to 1.72
0.57 to 1.04
0.28 to 0.57
0.14 to 0.28
0.09 to 0.14
0.04 to 0.09

0 50 100
kilometres

0 25 50
kilometres

Printed: 24/03/2009

mapping@unhcr.org

Camp in Tal

Impacts of Cyclones

- Natural disasters affect refugees and locals alike => need for integrated and multi-sectoral approach

- The cyclones result in injuries, loss of lives, and extensive damages to crops, roads, shelters, and other infrastructures

  - February 1993 – 1 refugee died and 81 refugees injured. 61% refugee shed structures and over 50% of latrines severely damaged
  - May 1994 – 61 refugees died and 637 refugees injured. 70% of refugee shed structures severely damaged
  - November 1995 – No deaths or injuries but many refugee sheds flattened
  - May 1997 – No deaths but some injuries. Refugee sheds damaged
  - September 1997 – No refugee injuries or deaths
  - May 1998 – No refugee injuries or deaths

Cyclone Preparedness Plan of Action

- Establish co-ordination committees both at Dhaka and Cox's Bazar with representatives of the line ministries, UN agencies, international organizations, and NGOs
- The aim is to ensure an effective emergency response in all sectoral activities within 24 hours e.g. evacuation, repair of damaged health, shelter structures

Relocation of Unregistered Refugees to Leda

- In 2007, the government agreed to relocate 9,000 unregistered refugees from the banks of tidal river to a safer site in Leda.
- The move was facilitated by Islamic Relief.

The Camp at Leda

- More secure and well laid out in 20 acres
- Basic needs supported by NGOs including Islamic Relief funded by the European Commission and UNICEF
- A health care center operated by Islamic Relief
- The incidence of disease has dropped significantly after the relocation

Co-Development
UN Joint Programme

- More comprehensive and better coordinated UN response through joint initiative in Teknaf and Ukhia Upazilas
- Target group – vulnerable populations, women and children in particular
- Key components – Livelihood, education, health, water & sanitation, protection of children and youth against exploitation
- It includes horticulture plantation, mangrove afforestation, establishment of climate resilience shelters, disaster preparedness

Conclusion

- Highly vulnerable populations including refugees will face greater risk due to the impact of climate change
- Adaptation measures are essential to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to extreme events
- Preparedness is of paramount importance for disaster risk reduction, emergency response, and post-disaster rehabilitation
- Local populations face the same challenges, which requires a co-existence, co-development approach that is integrated and multi-sectoral
- Within governments, as well as within international aid agencies, humanitarian actors need to engage with development actors to link short-term and long-term adaptation efforts

Thank you!

www.unhcr.org/climate

Camp During Rainy Season