

# THE NANSEN CONFERENCE

Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century

Oslo, Norway, June 5-7, 2011





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**“Nothing great and good can be furthered  
in the world without cooperation”** *Fridtjof Nansen*

## **ADVISORY BOARD:**

A group of international experts were consulted while developing the conference programme, in order to ensure selection of the most relevant topics for discussion.

### **The advisory board consisted of the following organisations and individuals:**

• Mr. Jose Riera, representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees • Mr. Youssef Nassef, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat  
• Mr. Jan Egeland, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs • Dr. Patricia Romero Lanako, National Center for Atmospheric Research • Dr. Koko Warner, United Nations University  
• Dr. Saleemul Huq, International Institute for Environment and Development • Dr. Richard A. Matthew, Center for Unconventional Security Affairs • Prof. Roger Zetter, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford • Ms. Anna Tibajuka, United Nations Habitat



*Elisabeth Rasmusson  
Secretary General, Norwegian Refugee Council*



*Pål Presterud  
Director, Center for International Climate and Environmental Research – Oslo*

## Pressing need for action

A well informed policy discussion on how to manage climate-change-induced displacement and other emerging humanitarian challenges, is of vital importance. The Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century was an important step in creating a closer dialogue between climate change scientists, humanitarian actors and policy makers, and brought together 230 delegates from national governments, civil society, the humanitarian community and the scientific community to explore the pressing need for policies and operational capacities to manage climate-change-induced displacement.

The Nansen Conference provided us with recommendations for the way forward:

- 1) Policies and responses should be guided by the relevant knowledge.
- 2) Attention should be given to the most vulnerable, to preventing humanitarian crisis and to resilience building to the impacts of climate change.
- 3) A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level to meet protection needs of people displaced across borders is needed.
- 4) Responses and policies should be based on non-discrimination, consent, empowerment, participation and partnerships with those directly affected.

We are on our way to change our climate beyond its natural variability. The frequency and intensity of important drivers of displacement such as droughts, floods and other extreme weather events are projected to increase. This has to some extent already been observed. The report “Displacement due to natural

hazard-induced disasters” indicated that 38 million people were displaced by sudden-onset weather-related natural disasters in 2010. It is likely that this number will increase as climate change progresses, affecting people through extreme weather events and longer term effects, such as sea level rise, increased water scarcity, desertification and deterioration of agricultural land and their associated effects on health, food security and ecosystem services.

Without concerted and decisive action to cut greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures could rise by more than 3 °C by the end of this century. Such increases in global temperature would change living conditions fundamentally throughout the globe and affect us all, but would have by far the greatest impact on the developing nations.

The international community should therefore take action to halt climate change, radically improve its prevention, preparedness and response capacity, support humanitarian financing that is more responsive on a larger scale and strengthen protection for the displaced, in their own country and across borders. There should also be a better understanding of the protection needs in natural disaster situations.

A fundamental concern is that while refugees from war and persecution are protected by international conventions, it is unclear what laws and policies protect people displaced across international borders by extreme weather events. This is a problem that the international community has to address urgently.

Managing climate-change-induced displacement will be a complex task for policy makers and practitioners. It is therefore fundamental that prevention of displacement and management of climate risk are on top of the political agenda and that we start acting now.

**“If global temperatures increase as projected, this will trigger a range of humanitarian challenges and adverse impacts on water, ecosystems, food production, coastal areas and human health.”**

*Rajendra K Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC*



**Jonas Gahr Støre**  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway*



**Erik Solheim**  
*Minister of the Environment and  
International Development, Norway*

## A double predicament

Today we are witnesses to heartbreaking scenes as thousands of hungry and hurt people of Somalia flee their country to end in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. After more than twenty years of armed conflict, and with the absence of a functioning state, local communities in Somalia have been made particularly vulnerable to the natural hazards that climate change is making even worse.

To the Nansen Conference in Oslo, 5-7 June 2011, the Norwegian Government, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Centre for Climate and Environmental Research, had invited civil society and authorities, scientists, humanitarian and development practitioners from affected and engaged countries, to explore the roads that might lead out of the double predicament of climate change and forced migration.

Robust laws, sound frameworks and treaties are one of these roads. This year we are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention. Norway joins other states and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in renewing our commitment to assisting refugees and internally displaced persons.

Emerging global trends are compelling us to look at the broad picture of migration. Climate change is the big amplifier: Natural disasters are becoming more disastrous. Livelihoods are eroding faster. Larger numbers of people are being forced to move.

People forced to move is a powerful reminder that urgent action is needed to reduce climate change. We need deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions to start mitigating climate change effectively.

As climate-related natural hazards are already on the rise around the world, the most important issue is prevention.

Preventing disasters and building resilient communities are fundamentally a political challenge that requires political solutions.

The dramatic situation in Somalia today illustrates that the people need more aid, but above all, they need peace and a functioning state that can safeguard people's basic needs. They need security, health and education and someone who can implement measures to prevent and manage future droughts.

On the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, we wished to honour Fridtjof Nansen's legacy as a scientist, polar explorer and international humanitarian.

We proposed that the Nansen Conference could discuss and recommend a common set of broad principles – the Nansen Principles – that should underpin actions to prevent or manage displacement, and protect displaced people in the face of climate change.

We believe that the ten Nansen Principles, extending succinctly from the summary provided by the very able chairperson of the conference, represent an important contribution to responding better to climate change and displacement.



**Margareta Wahlström**  
*United Nations Special Representative of the  
Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction,  
Chairperson of the Nansen Conference*

## A common understanding

The Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century, convened by the Government of Norway together with Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo and the Norwegian Refugee Council, has marked an important step in developing a common understanding and practical approach to the complex questions concerning climate variability, disaster risk and population movements.

The wide spectrum of high-level representatives and experts from the civil society and scientific community, as well as from Governments and international organisations, allowed for truly multi-sectoral discussions, inspiring innovative thinking and ideas. The present report well captures the scope and depth of the exchanges that lead to the formulation of the Nansen Principles. The Nansen Principles will offer concrete and clear guidance for further action.

The proposed Principles and the overall tone of the Conference were a true tribute to the spirit of Fridtjof Nansen and his visionary, yet very concrete, efforts to protect people through leveraging shared understanding and international cooperation.

I commend the conference hosts and organisers for their excellent work, and also recognise the special support and involvement shown by UNHCR. I was honoured by the privilege to chair the Nansen Conference, and was encouraged by its explicit understanding, that risk management strategies are central for planning our future. I would also like to extend a special appreciation to Mr. Harald Dovland, Vice-Chair of the Conference.

# The Nansen Principles

Building upon Nansen's legacy, the following principles were recommended to guide responses to some of the urgent and complex challenges raised by displacement in the context of climate change and other environmental hazards.

## I

Responses to climate and environmentally-related displacement need to be informed by adequate knowledge and guided by the fundamental principles of humanity, human dignity, human rights and international cooperation.

## II

States have a primary duty to protect their populations and give particular attention to the special needs of the people most vulnerable to and most affected by climate change and other environmental hazards, including the displaced, hosting communities and those at risk of displacement. The development of legislation, policies and institutions as well as the investment of adequate resources are key in this regard.

## III

The leadership and engagement of local governments and communities, civil society, and the private sector, are needed to address effectively the challenges posed by climate change, including those linked to human mobility.

## IV

When national capacity is limited, regional frameworks and international cooperation should support action at national level and contribute to building national capacity, underpinning development plans, preventing displacement, assisting and protecting people and communities affected by such displacement, and finding durable solutions.

## V

Prevention and resilience need to be further strengthened at all levels, particularly through adequate resources. International, regional, and local actors have a shared responsibility to implement the principles enshrined in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster.

## VI

Building local and national capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters is fundamental. At the same time, the international disaster response system needs to be reinforced. The development of multi-hazard early warning systems linking local and global levels is critical.

## VII

The existing norms of international law should be fully utilized, and normative gaps addressed.

## VIII

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a sound legal framework to address protection concerns arising from climate- and other environmentally-related internal displacement. States are encouraged to ensure the adequate implementation and operationalization of these principles through national legislation, policies and institutions.

## IX

A more coherent and consistent approach at the international level is needed to meet the protection needs of people displaced externally owing to sudden-onset disasters. States, working in conjunction with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders, could develop a guiding framework or instrument in this regard.

## X

National and international policies and responses, including planned relocation, need to be implemented on the basis of non-discrimination, consent, empowerment, participation and partnerships with those directly affected, with due sensitivity to age, gender and diversity aspects. The voices of the displaced or those threatened with displacement, loss of home or livelihood must be heard and taken into account, without neglecting those who may choose to remain.

# Introduction

Every year, millions of people are forced on the move due to natural hazards in their environments, many of which relate to extreme weather situations. It appears that climate change is making matters worse by increasing the frequency and intensity of such natural hazards. In the future, we may witness even more treacherous situations as our climate continues to change and long-term effects unfold.

If we are to take current and future risks seriously, a closer dialogue between authorities, climate change scientists, development and humanitarian actors, and policy makers is needed to develop knowledge-based and effective responses.

The Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century, convened by the Norwegian Government 5–7 June, 2011, in Oslo, gathered more than 230 academic experts, representatives of governments, international agencies and civil society, representing 38 affected and engaged countries.



*"We have to be able to address the root causes of climate change but we also have to mobilise resources and direct them to those who are most vulnerable."*

*Kristalina I. Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response*



*"Refugees from war were the challenge of Nansen's time. Today, additionally, we face displacement due to climate change. There seems to be no doubt that climate change will affect the lives of millions. I hope the spirit of Nansen – honest, brave and with full force – will galvanise the global community to join forces and work together in the tasks ahead."*

*H.R.H. Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway (Photo: Solve Sundsbø / The Royal Court)*



*"If we are to take effective measures to deal with the kinds of problems we are going to face of a humanitarian nature due to climate change, we really need to start immediately."*

*Rajendra K Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*



*"What we are now seeing are more and more people that are forced to flee because of lack of water, because of lack of food, because of extreme poverty and many of these situations are enhanced by climate change."*

*António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

The objective of the Nansen Conference was to facilitate multidisciplinary dialogue to improve our understanding of the challenges at hand and conclude with a set of recommendations for action.

## The Nansen Principles

The conference borrowed its name from Fridtjof Nansen, who was born 150 years ago. An iconic person in Norway's modern history, Nansen was both a trailblazing polar explorer and scientist and a prominent humanitarian actor. He undertook some of the first systematic surveys of the Arctic climate system and was the world's first High Commissioner for Refugees.

At the opening session, Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Norway, proposed the idea of developing a common set of broad principles that should guide actions to prevent or manage displacement, and protect displaced people in the face of climate change. The Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested that these could be called The Nansen Principles.

António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also speaking at the opening session, echoed the call for the formulation of such principles.

At the concluding session of the conference, the chairperson, Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, presented a summary of key points and ten Nansen Principles, reflecting the discussions that had taken place.

The Nansen Principles are found on page five of this report, whereas the chairperson's summary of key points is included at the end of this report, pages 18–19.

## Finding answers to pressing questions

Three questions constituted the overall structure of the conference, filling two subsequent sessions each:

- What do current science and case studies tell us about climate change and displacement?
- What should be done to adapt to climate change, reduce disaster risk and prevent displacement?
- What should be done to protect and assist persons who have been displaced or face the risk of being displaced?

This report presents each of the conference's six sessions, stating their objective and main focus, and tries to capture key messages. Moderators, speakers and panellists are listed, and further reading is referenced for each session.

Additional resources are accessible on the conference website: [www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no). Here you will find a background paper and the complete conference programme. Video streams, presentation manuscripts and abstracts document each of the sessions. The website also provides links to relevant articles and reports.

# Climate change-related drivers of displacement

The objective of this session was to present state-of-the-art knowledge on current and projected climate change, and its likely consequences for displacement.

The session demonstrated the crucial role to be played by the science community, as responses to environmental displacement can only be effective if informed by adequate knowledge.

## Key messages from the presentations:

- There is a 50 percent chance of global temperatures rising by 3-4°C, even if countries adhere to the emissions reductions pledged at the UN climate negotiations in Cancún in 2010. Despite the target of limiting average global temperature rise to 2°C, more severe outcomes are much more likely than more benign ones.
- Risk management implies that uncertainty cannot be a barrier to action. Public policy decisions in other areas are taken under higher levels of uncertainty than exist over climate change science, impacts or policy choices.
- In the event of a 4°C+ warming, not only is it likely that climate-induced population movements will be more considerable, but also their patterns could be significantly different, as people might react differently to temperature changes that would represent a threat to their very survival. Migration will become less of a choice; in many cases, migration will become displacement.
- Climate change and its consequences are issues of intergenerational justice, which makes it crucial for the public to get involved.



CHAD: Sandstorm in a settlement for people displaced by drought. (Photo: Jeremy Hartley/Panos/Felix Features)

**“We must build a robust understanding of the nature of climate change and its implications for ecological and human welfare.”**

*Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway*

## SPEAKERS

### Jay Gulledge

Senior Scientist and Program Director Pew Center on Global Climate Change & Non-resident Senior Fellow Center for a New American Security  
*Scientific Uncertainty and Climate Change Risk Management*

### François Gemenne

Research fellow at the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, Sciences Po Paris  
*Climate-Induced Displacements in a 4°C+ world: Scenarios and Policy Options*

### James Hansen

Head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Adjunct Professor at the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Columbia University  
*Impacts of Global Warming on Humanity and Nature*

## MODERATOR

### Harald Dovland

Former Head of Delegation Norwegian Climate Change Negotiation Team, vice chair of the conference

## READ MORE

At [www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no) you will find videos of the presentations and the panel discussion, in addition to presentation manuscripts and abstracts.

## OTHER RELEVANT REFERENCES:

**Nick Mabey, Jay Gulledge and Katherine Silverthorne, 2011**  
Degrees of Risk: Defining a Risk Management Framework for Climate Security <http://bit.ly/fNCTbj>

### François Gemenne, 2011

Climate-induced population displacements in a 4° C+ world  
Phil. Trans. R. Soc. A 2011 369, 182-195; <http://tiny.cc/eebsg>

# Case studies

During three parallel sessions, twelve case studies were presented, spanning the geographical and thematic diversity of climate change and displacement.

## PARALLEL A

### Moderator: Koko Warner

Head of the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation Section, UN University – Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)

### Patricia Romero-Lankao

Head of the Resilient and Sustainable Cities theme at the Science and Applications Program, National Center for Atmospheric Research

#### *Displacement or Adaptation? Climate Change and Migration in Mexico*

Romero-Lankao discussed patterns and drivers of migration in Mexico, stressing that migration is about development as well as about climate change. She highlighted climate change events negatively affecting rural economies, resulting in increased migration to urban areas, where more job opportunities exist.

### François Gemenne

Research fellow at the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, Sciences Po Paris

#### *Tuvalu, a laboratory for climate change?*

Gemenne argued that the small archipelago of Tuvalu, in the South Pacific Ocean, was often portrayed as an Atlantis in the making, a symbol of future climate change impacts. Gemenne called this a Western perception, which he contrasted with the perception of Tuvalu's inhabitants, as well as of those who have migrated to New Zealand.

### Rajendra K Pachauri

Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC

#### *Climate change impacts and adaptation needs in Africa*

Pachauri said vulnerabilities included human health, food and economic security, and water resources – citing that by 2020, 75 to 250 million people will experience water stress due to climate change. He identified key adaptation needs, such as a thorough examination of future vulnerabilities and impacts to climate change, adaptation strategies to increase adaptive capacities over the long term, and effective and powerful climate change modelling tools.

### Aqqaluk Lyngø

Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council

#### *Global Change – Local impact, displacement, adaptation and change of livelihoods in Inuit Nunaat*

Lyngø argued that no adaptation programme existed for the Arctic indigenous peoples, due to denial by the regional and national governments. He lamented that warming waters were forcing communities to exchange traditional forms of income for an offshore oil and gas economy.

## PARALLEL B

### Moderator: Jay Gulledge

Senior Scientist and Director for Science and Impacts at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change

### Ida Inés Pedroso Herrera

Researcher, Department of Environmental Geology, Geophysics and Risks, La Habana

#### *Climate change impacts and adaptation in Cuba*

Herrera said that vulnerability and risk assessments were important tools in the prevention and preparedness of natural disaster reduction, identifying rising sea level as the largest threat facing Cuba due to climate change.

### Jörn Birkmann

Head of the Vulnerability Assessment, Risk Management and Adaptive Planning Section, UNU-EHS

#### *Resettlement as adaptation – case study Mekong Delta Vietnam – stabilisation or destabilisation*

Birkmann highlighted resettlement initiatives as examples of climate change adaptation. Using a local case study of resettlement process in Phu Hiep, Vietnam, Birkmann listed positive implications of resettlement. He noted that resettlement projects often fail, not because of inadequate inputs, but due to linear planning and lack of a micro and macro focus.

### Michael Werz

Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

### Laura Conley

Research Associate, Center for American Progress

#### *Climate change, migration and security for a new 21st century foreign policy*

Werz and Conley explained that the Obama Administration had changed US foreign policy to include issues of climate change, development, migration and security. They announced that their centre would publish a series of reports on complex crisis scenarios, which look at the nexus of climate change, migration and security.



**Atiq Rahman**

Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies  
***Climate Change Impacts and Responses in Bangladesh***  
 Rahman argued that Bangladesh was particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, citing its frequent natural and man-made disasters, poor governance and weak institutions. He mentioned that in addition to establishing national plans, governments should also undertake local adaptation plans.

**PARALLEL C****Moderator: Madeleen Helmer**

Head of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

**Cat Jones**

Protection and Advocacy Advisor, Norwegian Refugee Council in Pakistan

**Michelle Yonetani**

Senior Advisor, Natural Disasters, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

***Climate change and protection in Pakistan; Experiences and responses during Pakistan 2010 flood***

Jones and Yonetani outlined the impacts of flood displacement on women in the Sindh Province of Pakistan, including secondary displacement, limited access to assistance, and violence against displaced women. They recommended further strengthening responses in protecting and assisting women displaced by natural disasters.

**Oscar Alvarez Gila**

Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno

***Climatic events and migration in Ecuador: consequences of the extreme 1997-1998 El Niño event***

Gila said migration in Ecuador was a customary coping strategy to adapt to environmental challenges and economic effects, noting that the 1997-1998 El Niño shifted the migration patterns from internal and temporary to international movements, with people most frequently moving to Spain.

**Tamer Afifi**

Associate Academic Officer in the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation section, UNU-EHS

***Consequences of environmental problems and climate change for migration in Niger***

Afifi highlighted the important role played by women in restoring the environment. He cited factors influencing environmental migration in Niger, including land ownership, cultural issues, financial means, and alternative livelihoods.

**Vikram Kolmannskog**

Independent adviser and scholar

***Conflict and drought in Somalia***

Kolmannskog discussed the links between conflict, disaster and displacement in the context of climate change in Somalia, underlining that traditional protection mechanisms were being challenged due to the conflict. He also highlighted the complex dynamics of human mobility.

**Read more**

At [www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no) you will find full video coverage of parallel session A, and quick video summaries of all three parallel sessions, in addition to all presentation manuscripts and abstracts.



*People look for anything of value on the eastern coast of the island of Bhola in Bangladesh – after a damaging storm in June 2011. The Bhola Islanders are slowly being displaced by climate change affecting the low-lying country. (Photo: Patrick Brown/Panos/Felix Features)*

**BANGLADESH****Between sea-level rise and melting glaciers**

By Vikram Kolmannskog

As citizens of a delta-nation, Bangladeshis are used to living with and benefiting from flooding, but now climate change is contributing to an increase in floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones and other disasters. The country is faced with sea-level rise from one side and melting Himalayan glaciers affecting the rivers on the other side. A sea-level rise of one metre would threaten to put 50 per cent of the country under water.

A high number of Bangladeshis have already lost their livelihoods as a result of natural disasters, and have been forced to look for work elsewhere. Today, most Bangladeshi migration is internal, and predominantly from rural to urban areas. In some cases heads of households migrate temporarily to find work. In others, entire families move and settle permanently.

Many people also settle illegally in India in search of a better life. Often they end up in prostitution, or in sweatshops under slave-like conditions, or are deported. The massive movements that are likely in 20 or 30 years could also pose a threat to regional security. Others do not have the means to migrate. Trafficking, particularly of women and children, has been compounded by recent disasters and increased vulnerability.

Bangladesh is often highlighted as a country that has managed to reduce casualties and economic loss by good disaster-risk management. The official death tolls in recent disasters are far lower than in previous ones. One important measure has been the building of storm shelters in villages at risk. This saves human lives, livestock and resources. As a result, people in these villages feel less threatened and are therefore less inclined to move.

*Main source: Poncelet, A., 2009. Bangladesh. EACH-FOR.*

# Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

The objective of this session was to discuss climate-change adaptation strategies in the context of human mobility and forced migration.

The session underscored that vulnerability to climate change is distributed unevenly, and explored institutional and rights-based approaches to building resilience and reducing disaster risk.

## Key messages from the presentations:

- Poor communities are more vulnerable to natural disasters, including to those being compounded by climate change, such as floods and cyclones. Such disasters threaten public health and livelihoods, and thus also displacement of affected people. Risks associated with climate change must therefore be targeted within broader development and disaster management efforts.
- Taking human rights into consideration may help strengthening the resilience of people and communities. Preventive measures contribute to reduced vulnerability, if they include measures to secure rights as well as to restore them in the aftermath of disasters. There is also an increased tendency to highlight the human rights accountability of states failing to take preventive and protective measures in such areas as the protection of life or property.
- Clause 14 (f) of the Cancun Adaptation Framework under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change includes migration and displacement provisions, which should serve both as a matrix and a call for action: *“14. Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following:*

*(f) Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels;”*

## Key messages from the discussion:

- There is a need to continue this discussion on how to “operationalise” clause 14 (f) of the Cancun Adaptation Framework. A dedicated forum may be needed to formulate practical guidance to this end.
- All disasters are in a sense man-made, because knowledge and resources exist to prevent a lot more than we do. One needs to work with governments on the premise of prevention being an obligation.
- As climate change and migration increase risk and vulnerability, the strengthening of social protection systems becomes increasingly important.
- Better data and knowledge are needed to understand and respond to the implications of climate change for human mobility and displacement.
- Urbanisation is increasingly a feature of environmental displacement and a phenomenon to which such displacement contributes, which is particularly obvious in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Different responses are required for different manifestations of migration related to climate change and natural disasters: Affected people need assistance to alleviate their suffering and prevent forced migration, displaced persons require protective measures, and migration should be viewed both as a survival and adaptation strategy.

**“Climate change (...) is the great amplifier of droughts, floods and cyclones. The most important issue is prevention, prevention, prevention.”**

*Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway*



MYANMAR: Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar in May 2008, killing 140,000 and displacing 800,000. The Norwegian Refugee Council is rebuilding homes in the hardest hit area. Diagonal beams fitted to the house frame are among the new building techniques applied, in order to make the new homes resistant to future cyclones. (Photo: Martin Suvatne/NRC)

#### SPEAKERS

##### Atiq Rahman

Executive Director Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies  
*Climate-smart disaster risk management*

##### Walter Kälin

Professor at Bern University and former Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons  
*A human rights-based approach to resilience building*

##### Koko Warner

Head of the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation Section at the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security  
*Adaptation under the UNFCCC process: What can the Cancun Adaptation Framework offer?*

#### PANELISTS

##### Margareta Wahlström

United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

##### Bart W. Édes

Director of the Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division, Asian Development Bank

##### Neil Buhne

Director of Geneva Office of the United Nations Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

##### Shahidul Haque

Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships, International Organization for Migration

#### MODERATOR

##### Harald Dovland

Former Head of Delegation Norwegian Climate Change Negotiation Team, vice chair of the conference

#### READ MORE

At [www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no) you will find videos of the presentations and the panel discussion, in addition to presentation manuscripts and abstracts.

#### OTHER RELEVANT REFERENCES:

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:**  
The Cancun Adaptation Framework

**United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction:**

- The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters
- Global assessment report on disaster risk reduction (2011): Revealing risk, redefining development

**Asian Development Bank:**

Project: "Policy Options to Support Climate-induced Migration"

**International Organization for Migration:**

Conference: International Dialogue on Migration: Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration (29 - 30 March 2011)

# Disaster preparedness and early warning

The objective of this session was to discuss how early warning systems could better support preparedness for and response to displacement situations in times of climate change.

The session highlighted the need for early warning information that is accessible and understandable at the level where early actions are to be taken.

## Key messages from the presentations:

- Climate services are weakest where they are needed the most – in climate-vulnerable developing countries. Displacement and loss of life is today a sign that the poorest do not know by what and when they will be affected and have no resources to adapt.
- The foundations for a global system for climate services are already available, but must be developed and built upon to reach all regions and countries. Investments must be made to expand existing weather and climate observing systems and data exchange, climate research programmes and risk management techniques already used successfully in different economic and social sectors.
- As climate change increases climate variability, local expert knowledge is being made redundant. Particularly vulnerable communities are thereby losing one of their few assets, one which is essential for their livelihoods: knowing when to sow and harvest.
- In order to be actionable in the right place at the right time, early warning information should be sensitive to and explicitly address different time-scales: short term, medium term and long term.
- Lives lost, response time and costs are minimised when there is good communication between the forecast, climate change and humanitarian response communities.
- The humanitarian financing system has not yet been adapted to the use of early warning systems, and is therefore hampering the possibilities of early actions.

## Key messages from the discussion:

- Early warning and action require not only technical equipment but also investments in human resources.
- Improvement of climate services and weather forecasts is not enough. The user community must be able to understand and apply the information, have better tools to manage uncertainty and take risks, and the capacity and resources to act.
- Early warning information must be actionable, e.g. by including human impact analysis of projected climate-related natural hazards.
- Interdisciplinary partnerships are needed, such as between climate scientists and disaster risk managers, to identify new information needs and define questions for further research to improve future operational disaster risk management.
- Climate information should be integrated into decision-making platforms, making climate information easier to use by disaster risk managers in their daily activities.
- The efficacy and cost-effectiveness of different preparedness measures need to be better understood, as not all preparedness is equal.
- There are good examples (e.g. Ethiopia 2003) that early warning and preparedness can prevent distress migration. Early warning should be institutionalised into countries' risk management, contingency plans and social security programmes.
- Mobile telecommunications technology is already widely available also in poor and vulnerable communities and should be used to share early warning messages and educate on preventative measures (text, video and radio messaging).
- There is scope for a more active role for private business, such as the telecommunications sector, in providing solutions for effective disaster preparedness and early warning.



Jan Egeland, Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, addresses the participants at the Nansen Youth Conference. (Photo: Amund Bakke Foss/NRC)

## The Nansen Youth Conference

Climate change is an intergenerational issue. Therefore, a parallel youth conference was organised in conjunction with the Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement.

The youth conference brought together delegates from political youth parties and humanitarian and environmental youth organisations, to discuss and learn about humanitarian implications of climate change and to develop common policies and recommendations for action. A joint resolution was

handed to the chair of the main conference and distributed to the delegates. One important message was that children and youth must be ensured real influence in identifying solutions to climate change issues.

*The full joint resolution can be found on:*  
[www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no), under reports, articles, links.

### SPEAKERS

#### Jan Egeland

Director of Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and Co Chair of the High-Level Task Force for Global Climate Services  
*Climate knowledge for action: A global framework for climate services*

#### Madeleen Helmer

Head of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre  
*From Early Warning to Early Action*

### PANELISTS

#### Dao Xuan Hoc

Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam

#### Richard Choularton

Senior Policy Officer, Office for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, World Food Programme

#### Oddvar Hesjedal

Executive Vice President and Head of People Development at Telenor Group

### MODERATOR

#### Patricia Romero-Lankao

Head of the Resilient and Sustainable Cities theme at the Science and Applications Program, National Center for Atmospheric Research

### READ MORE

At [www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no) you will find videos of the presentations and the panel discussion, in addition to presentation manuscripts and abstracts.

# Filling the gaps in the protection regime

The objective of this session was to discuss protection coverage and gaps in the existing international legal regimes for people displaced by climate-related natural hazards and what could or should be done to enhance their protection.

## Key messages from the presentations:

- Policy responses will need to be varied depending on factors such as whether movement is internal or cross-border, rapid or slow, forced or voluntary.
- Responses to climate-related movement must not operate in a vacuum. Sustained dialogue across different policy and disciplinary spheres is required.
- Solutions need to be developed within a human rights framework, underscored by broader humanitarian norms such as the fundamental principles of humanity, human dignity, human rights and international cooperation.
- The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a sound basic framework for protecting those displaced within the borders of their own countries as a result of climate-related events. Prevention, mitigation and arbitrary displacement are also covered by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- It is important that states implement the Guiding Principles domestically through appropriate laws, policies and institutions.
- People displaced across international frontiers and those abroad, who are unable to return home due to the impacts of climate change on their places of origin, are at present not adequately protected by any international instrument, despite the fact that their movements are involuntary.
- Referring to cross-border movements driven by extreme weather events as “external displacement” appears appropriate and does away with the inaccurate and often confusing terms “climate refugees” or “environmental refugees”.
- The lack of choice – i.e. forced migration/displacement – is more evident in sudden-onset events, such as storms and floods, than in slow-onset events.
- There is a need to develop a more coherent and consistent approach to anticipate and address the need for protection of and solutions for people displaced externally, across borders, even if the numbers may not be large for the time being.
- The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement offer a sensible point of departure. A number of them are equally applicable in situations of external displacement. Additionally, standards such as those developed to respond to the mass influx of refugees, could be drawn upon. Furthermore, scenarios could be developed to identify the circumstances in which temporary protection would be activated. Apart from the scope of coverage, it will also be important to clarify the contents and duration of such protection.

## Key messages from the discussion:

- From a protection perspective, it makes little sense to distinguish between displacement caused by a non-climate-related natural hazard (e.g. volcanic eruption, earthquake) and by a climate-related natural hazard (e.g. storm or flood).
- International law should facilitate political action as opposed to constituting a pretext for inaction. Our efforts should therefore be empirically based and action-oriented, striving to realise the full potential of existing international law.

### SPEAKERS

#### Chaloka Beyani

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced People  
*A Human Rights Based Approach to Protection of Environmentally Displaced Persons*

#### Volker Türk

Director of the Division of International Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
*Can protection of environmentally displaced persons be found in existing protection regimes? What are the next steps from a protection perspective?*

#### Jane McAdam

Director International Refugee and Migration Law Project, University of South Wales, Sydney  
*How to address the protection gap – ways forward*

### PANELISTS

#### Elisabeth Rasmusson

Secretary General of Norwegian Refugee Council

#### Rolf Einar Fife

Director General, Legal Affairs Department, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### MODERATOR

#### Roger Zetter

Director of the Refugee Study Centre, University of Oxford

### READ MORE

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**“It is essential to help societies to become resilient and adapt themselves to what unfortunately are inevitable impacts of climate change, but it is also essential to address the gaps in protection and the assistance to the people displaced by all these factors that climate change enhances.”**

*António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

*INDIA: A boy stands on the dead stump of a palm tree. Islanders of the Sunderbans in the Bay of Bengal can only stand by and watch as rising sea levels consume their homes and livelihoods. Many islanders have already become displaced. (Photo: Robin Hammond/Panos/Felix Features)*

# Adapting humanitarian disaster response to climate-induced displacement

The objective of the session was to discuss what to do and how to act as humanitarians, governments and people wanting to assist vulnerable communities in times of climate change and more extreme natural hazards.

The focus was on displacement as a humanitarian consequence of climate change. The session explored capacity needs and recommended measures to ensure the right response at all levels of the humanitarian system.

## Key messages from the presentations:

- The call to action is unmistakable. The humanitarian system, among others, has to do its part as the ultimate lifeline for those under the most severe threats by climate change.
- Real, transformative and sustainable solutions will come through long-term development, which requires policy frameworks, investments and capacities that the humanitarian system alone cannot mobilise.
- Current limitations within the humanitarian system include inadequate knowledge about how climate change exacerbates acute humanitarian vulnerabilities, tendency for shock-triggered rather than preventive responses, poor linkages between relief assistance, disaster risk reduction, rehabilitation and development.
- It is extremely hard to prioritise planning for the long-term humanitarian consequences of climate change with many more pressing needs on the immediate horizon.
- The humanitarian system must seek to better understand risk at the national, district and community level, both in rural and urban settings, and it must assist governments in planning not only for potential emergencies but in integrating risk reduction into national development programming.
- Knowledge-based and comprehensive approaches require that the humanitarian system work more closely with the scientific and academic community, as well as with development actors and disaster risk managers.
- Local ownership, leadership and capacity building must be at the centre of all efforts, with governments and communities; and tools must be adapted to the places where disasters and displacement are increasingly occurring – in developmental and urban settings.
- Challenges specific to humanitarian response in highly populated urban areas will likely occur more often – in part because of environmental displacement and unsustainable rural livelihoods. Meeting these challenges requires learning and innovation, such as employing cash- and voucher-based assistance methods.
- Pooling resources and leveraging existing systems, notably information management systems, by building on innovative technology is something that the humanitarian system must do more to scale up the global response capacity. For example, the use of mobile phone technology to manage cash transfers to affected populations can empower those in need and reduce transaction costs.
- In terms of funding, governments should be supported to include risk management not only in their planning but also in their budgeting. At the same time, the humanitarian community should seek direct and multi-year funding for prevention and risk reduction.

**“We need strong alliances of different types of actors like never before. Conferences like this are the venue for forging and solidifying these.”**

Louis-Georges Arseneault, Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF)



- Successful emergency preparedness and response systems combine continuous surveillance of key parameters, such as nutritional and meteorological data, with pre-positioned supplies, strong transport and warehousing systems, training and education. While the next drought may not be prevented, early warning and ready capacities enable proactive and effective responses.
- Aiming for a comprehensive approach; the example of Uganda. The country has over the recent years enacted a number of policies relevant to the challenges of climate change and displacement, such as the National Policy on Disaster Preparedness and Management (2011), which mainstreams disaster preparedness and management in national planning and budgeting; the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons (2004), which addresses protection of and assistance to internally displaced as a result of both internal civil strife and natural hazards; the five-year National Development Plan integrates disaster risk reduction; and contingency planning to incorporate disaster risk reduction in district plans is under way.
- Regional collaboration is key. Uganda hosted the African Union's Special Summit on Internally Displaced Persons, Returnees and Refugees in Africa in 2009. The outcome of this summit was the pace-setting Kampala Convention.

#### Key messages from the discussion:

- Disaster risk reduction tools must be modified to address small-scale and urban displacement.
- Municipalities and urban planners represent key constituencies and partners for efforts to strengthen resilience and reduce disaster risk.
- Given the need to respond better to unpredictable disasters, there is scope for a bigger role for children as active participants in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- Obstacles faced by the humanitarian system include current financial structures and approach mechanisms, innovation being discouraged within organisations, the inability to focus on long-term issues due to short-term crises, and difficulties in gaining the interest of politicians and the public.



## Newly displaced in 2010

At least 42.3 million people were newly displaced by sudden-onset disasters caused by natural hazard events in 2010, according to a report from the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

The report, released in June 2011,

shows that the displacement of men, women and children from their homes, due to natural hazard-induced disasters, is a large-scale global phenomenon. Climate related disasters – primarily floods and storms – were responsible for 90 percent of the displacement in 2010. This was

also the case in 2009. Asia was, by far, the continent with the highest total number of people displaced.

Cause of displacement	2008		2009		2010	
	Displaced (million)	Percentage of total	Displaced (million)	Percentage of total	Displaced (million)	Percentage of total
Climate-related disasters	20.3	56 %	15.2	91 %	38.3	90 %
Geophysical disasters	15.8	44 %	1.5	9 %	4.0	10 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36.1 million</b>		<b>16.7 million</b>		<b>42.3 million</b>	

#### SPEAKERS

##### Kelly David

Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Regional Office of Southern and Eastern Africa (OCHA)  
*Building appropriate humanitarian response capacities to climate induced displacement*

##### Tarsis Kabwegyere

Former Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Uganda  
*Climate change: How to ensure national level response capacities? Uganda as a case*

##### Louis-Georges Arsenault

Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
*Impact of climate change on humanitarian response systems*

#### PANELISTS

##### Katiuscia Fara

Senior Officer of Climate Change Adaptation, Community Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

##### Amelia Kyazze

Head of the Conflict and Humanitarian Policy Department, Save the Children UK

#### MODERATOR

##### Jan Egeland

Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

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Chairperson for the Nansen Conference was **Margareta Wahlström**, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. Vice-Chair was Harald Dovland, former chief climate negotiator for Norway.

## Chairperson's Summary

**1.** The outcome of the conference is expected to feed into relevant development fora and international and regional policy processes, such as the UNHCR ministerial-level conference in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50th anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness to be held in December this year, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on IDPs at its upcoming 66th session, COP17 in Durban and Rio + 20 in 2012.

**2.** The world is now on its way to change the climate beyond its natural variability. Without concerted, decisive action, and stronger international cooperation, we face a high risk of environmental, economic, and social disruption that would fundamentally change living conditions for large parts of the globe. The implications for human welfare and security, and for our strategies for adaptation, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian aid and protection of displaced people, could be far-reaching. While long-term responses to climate change need to be developmental at their core, an immediate focus should be the elaboration of mechanisms and strategies to manage disaster risk.

**3.** Science tells us that deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required to avoid dramatic impacts. Under the UNFCCC, there is consensus that urgent action should be taken to hold the global average temperature increase below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. The world is not yet on a pathway to ensure that this goal is met. To attain it, strong political efforts are needed, first of all in industrialized countries, to continue to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and develop a green economy in order to build low-carbon societies. Given the present situation in international climate change negotiations, it would be wise to prepare for a significantly larger temperature increase than 2 degrees.

**4.** In the short term, it is not necessarily the temperature increase itself that poses the largest challenge in terms of human mobility, but the associated changes in, and combined effects of, precipitation patterns (drought and flooding), storms,

and sea level rise; loss of biodiversity, and ecosystem services; and resulting health risk, food and livelihood insecurity.

**5.** While the precise scale, location and timing of population movements are uncertain, there is growing evidence that they will be substantial and will increase in the years to come. Climate change acts as an impact multiplier and accelerator to other drivers of human mobility. Most displacement is likely to be internal, but there will also be external displacement. From a protection perspective, there is no compelling reason to distinguish between displacement due to climate-related and other disasters.

**6.** The complexity of drawing a sharp distinction between “voluntary” and “forced” migration (displacement) spurred by environmental and development factors must be borne in mind. Motivation is a continuum, with “voluntary” at one end of the spectrum, in a gradual transition to “forced” at the other.

**7.** The displacement dimension is most evident today in the context of sudden-onset disasters. There is, however, a need to further explore the range of issues that could arise as a result of slow-onset disasters and longer-term climate change impacts, such as planned relocation and migration management.

**8.** The conference highlighted the need to generate further knowledge and clearer thinking about climate change and its implications for ecological and human welfare. The complex interlinkages between climate change and other drivers of population movements and the need to be cognizant of local contexts were emphasised. There was a strong call for further research on topics such as the impact of slow- versus rapid-onset disasters; vulnerability to displacement; adaptation, planned relocation and migration responses; and the scale and impact of migration and displacement.

**9.** The conference contributed to and urged making knowledge and information available across disciplines, as well as among practitioners and policy-makers at all levels. This requires

continuous dialogue between all relevant stakeholders and general awareness-raising.

**10.** Paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Agreements is an important global affirmation of the need for measures related to migration, displacement and planned relocation and its implementation should be explored through appropriate fora.

### Action to help prevent and manage displacement

**11.** There is growing certainty that developing nations, and the most vulnerable communities and populations within them, will be the worst affected by climate change. Development interventions to support resilience are therefore essential. Disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures can limit the scale and negative impact of climate change. Such measures should be guided by a comprehensive climate risk management approach. Without effective climate change mitigation measures, however, adaptation may no longer be feasible.

**12.** The most vulnerable will be less able or likely to migrate, or even to move at all. The State's duty to protect people entails an obligation to help people move from zones where they face a danger. More guidance is needed on rights-based planned relocation. Involuntary relocation rarely leads to improvements in the quality of life of those who have been relocated, so moving communities in anticipation of climate-related hazards may precipitate vulnerability rather than avoiding it, and should only be considered when adequate alternatives that enable people to rebuild their lives are available.

**13.** Building sustainable and human rights-based resilience to climate change is a prerequisite for preventing displacement from being among the consequences of climate change. Preventive measures contribute to reducing vulnerability if they include measures to secure rights as well as to restore them in the aftermath of disasters. Furthermore, studies have shown that prevention is cost-effective.

**14.** The consequences of climate change will vary across the globe and the impacts will be felt at the local level. Every region will need unique, specific solutions. Due to accelerating urbanization, city-dwellers, in particular, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate change risk. It is crucial to involve and empower local communities and authorities in reducing the risk of climate-induced disasters, planning integrated multi-hazard approaches to disasters, and reducing the need for displacement. For this empowerment to be effective, due sensitivity is required to variations in resourcefulness and vulnerability linked to age, gender and other aspects of diversity.

**15.** Migration – whether within a country or across national borders – may be a natural and rational adaptation response. States – if need be, supported by the international community – should proactively anticipate and plan for migration as part of their adaptation strategies and development plans. Existing regional and sub-regional arrangements, including mechanisms already enabling free movement, could apply to climate-related migration.

### Protection of and assistance to displaced people

**16.** Participants highlighted a broad array of difficulties that directly affect the protection and wellbeing of people displaced

within their own country. These included the safety and security of affected communities, particularly indigenous groups and pastoralists, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities; access to emergency treatment and other health services; replacement of identity documentation; access to shelter; and access to services, programmes and resources for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

**17.** The international humanitarian system and its actors need to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges resulting from climate change. Traditional barriers between the humanitarian and development fields – be they institutional, funding-related or conceptual – should not be allowed to stifle the action, innovation and change needed to alleviate suffering and strengthen resilience.

**18.** Making global climate services and data universally available was highlighted as a key step to ensure adequate early warning systems and informed decision-making. Partnership and cooperation with users of this information at all levels was considered crucial to ensure effective utilisation of the information. In this context, partnerships with the private sector and use of modern technology, such as mobile telecommunications, were recognised as strong enablers.

**19.** Both the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the African Union's 2009 Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa cover internal displacement resulting from natural disasters, including those linked to climate change.

**20.** There is a range of international and regional instruments that may provide responses to various forms of cross-border displacement related to climate change, such as the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing Specific aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. However, their coverage is limited. They could, *inter alia*, apply in cases where disaster-struck population groups are denied essential assistance and protection.

**21.** The terms 'climate refugees' and 'environmental refugee' should be avoided, as they are legally inaccurate and misleading. There is however a need to clarify the terminology for displacement related to climate change and other natural hazards. One suggestion was to refer to 'environmentally displaced persons'.

**22.** Human rights principles, including non-refoulement, may be construed to provide protection for those falling outside the international refugee protection framework. Some countries have the practice of granting temporary protection or a form of complementary protection or humanitarian status to people who have fled – or cannot return – due to a natural disaster. In some cases, State practice is guided by human rights considerations, while in others practice explicitly refers to natural disasters.

**23.** There is, however, a normative gap with respect to external displacement resulting from disasters, which needs to be addressed. It was suggested that states, in conjunction with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders, could develop a guiding framework or instrument for the protection of people displaced externally due to sudden-onset natural disasters, including those related to climate change.

# THE NANSEN CONFERENCE

Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century

Every year, millions of people are forced on the move due to natural hazards in their environments, many of which relate to extreme weather situations. It appears that climate change is making matters worse, by increasing the frequency and intensity of such natural hazards. In the future, we may witness even more treacherous situations as our climate continues to change and long-term effects unfold.

The Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the 21st Century, convened by the Norwegian Government 5–7 June, 2011, in Oslo, gathered 230 academic experts, humanitarian and development practitioners, representatives of governments, international agencies and civil society, representing 38 affected and engaged countries.

The objective of the Nansen Conference was to facilitate multidisciplinary dialogue to improve our understanding of the challenges at hand and conclude with a set of recommendations for action.



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## Fridtjof Nansen

The conference borrowed its name from Fridtjof Nansen, who was born 150 years ago. An iconic person in Norway's modern history, Nansen was both a trailblazing polar explorer and scientist and a prominent humanitarian actor. He undertook some of the first systematic surveys of the Arctic climate system and was the world's first High Commissioner for Refugees.

While still in his twenties, he acquired world fame by crossing the Greenland ice cap on skis in 1889. Convinced that the North Pole region was not a landmass, Nansen decided to prove it by specially designing a ship (the "Fram"), sailing it into the pack ice and trusting the ocean's currents to carry the ship, stuck in the ice, through regions of the Arctic that previous expeditions had tried in vain to reach. The expedition was a success, not least because Nansen ventured to leave the Fram on his skis, to reach a latitude of 86° 14', farther north than anyone had ever gone before.

Following World War I, Nansen was designated Chairman of the Norwegian Delegation to the League of Nations, where he always stood up for humanitarian causes. In 1921, he was asked by the League of Nations to become its first High Commissioner for Refugees. Nansen guided efforts to help hundreds of thousands of refugees to survive, to acquire some sort of legal status and to obtain jobs.

He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922 for his efforts to deal with the humanitarian crisis affecting hundreds of thousands of refugees, stateless people and prisoners of war stranded after World War I.

[www.nansenconference.no](http://www.nansenconference.no)