**CALL FOR INPUT & CONVERSATIONS INVITATION - UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons:**

**Human rights impacts of planned relocations:**

* While temporary displacements are on the rise worldwide, encompassing Bangladesh as well, there remains a lack of comprehensive data on various forms of migration - be it seasonal or permanent. This deficiency extends to understanding the hardships faced by communities compelled to relocate due to disasters and the effects of climate change. The available statistics fail to offer sufficient guidance for countries to develop effective strategies unless the perspectives of the affected individuals are integrated into policy and program development and execution. Consequently, governments tend to react to these challenges by formulating policies and programs that often offer only temporary or inadequate solutions.
* According to the research report titled "Addressing Climate Change Induced Displacement and Migration in Bangladesh: Taking a Human Rights Based Approach" carried out by ActionAid Bangladesh in 2021, the floods in 2019 affected individuals in 21 districts of Bangladesh, impacting around 580,000 people and displacing over 307,000 individuals ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) believes that through a human rights-based approach, displacement, and forced migration can be avoided by building **absorptive**, **adaptive**, and **transformative capacity** of people, society, the institution, infrastructure, and environment. Although relocation is considered an option of last resort, spontaneous community-led migration and government-supported ‘planned’ relocations are taking place in both rural and urban areas, as populations look for safer, more productive land and alternative livelihoods. In most cases, securing land for resettlement projects is one of the most challenging issues including re-establishing livelihoods, problems accessing basic services, conflict with host communities and disruption to education and health care.
* The primary difficulties encountered by migrant families in urban slums revolve around essential services like water and sanitation, livelihood prospects, access to governmental services, and the absence of social security. Regarding employment, migrants relocating to secondary cities or rural regions confront numerous obstacles, with no assurance of securing work upon arrival. Many resort to daily wage labor positions, where instances of exploitation and significantly low wages are common.
* Women and children face heightened vulnerability to various social challenges when undergoing migration. Typically, men opt for migration for work, leaving women with a triple burden of managing household tasks, caring for their families, and sometimes enduring sexual and mental harassment from other men in the absence of male family members. In certain instances, children experience emotional distress during migration, being compelled to abandon schooling if they migrate and often resorting to labor to cope with financial constraints.

**Examples of Planned relocation in Bangladesh**

**Ashrayan Project**: A government-led initiative aimed at providing housing and support to climate-displaced people, including those affected by river erosion, floods, and other climate-related disasters. The project seeks to relocate vulnerable populations to safer areas and provide them with necessary infrastructure and livelihood support.

**Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP):** This project, implemented by the Government of Bangladesh with assistance from international organizations such as the World Bank, focuses on developing infrastructure and providing support for communities living on char lands (temporary sandbars in river channels). The project aims to improve livelihoods and reduce vulnerability to natural disasters by relocating vulnerable populations to safer areas.

**Climate Resilient Participatory Afforestation and Reforestation Project (CRPARP):** This project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by the Government of Bangladesh, aims to enhance climate resilience through afforestation and reforestation activities. As part of this initiative, communities vulnerable to climate change impacts are encouraged to relocate to areas where reforestation efforts are being implemented to mitigate environmental risks.

A model of Planned relocation by ActionAid Bangladesh:

***Cluster Village Model:*** One of the best practices of planned relocation by ActionAid Bangladesh is the cluster village model.Based on participatory vulnerability analysis in 3 climate hotspot districts- Sirajganj (flood prone), Naogaon (drought prone) and Patuakhali (cyclone prone), climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction solutions have been implemented by community members. One such community decided solution is the cluster village model, a model of flood resistant Sirajganj. The cluster village inhabitants decided to make their village resilient to respective hazard through adaptive measures like raising their homestead, constructing their home with durable materials, engaging in alternative livelihood options. Based on the experience of Sirajganj the initiative has been replicated in flood prone Faridpur district, which is called Doreen Village. Please check the following link for more details.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDPHTmCMoiE>

**Legal, policy and institutional frameworks:**

* Bangladesh is persistently enhancing its social safety net program (SSNP) to combat poverty effectively. While the SSNP has been pivotal in poverty reduction, it is imperative for the Bangladeshi government to expand its efforts by implementing Universal Social Protection. This comprehensive system should encompass livelihood creation, social insurance, and social safety nets to tackle climate-related losses, mitigate displacement, and minimize migration. Additionally, the current social safety net initiatives fall short in meeting the populace's requirements.
* To effectively execute the Delta Plan 2100, it is essential to create a Climate Risk and Resilience Index. This index will offer comprehensive data at both macro and micro levels, encompassing villages. It involves digitizing risk and resource maps, along with assessing household vulnerability to various hazards. This initiative will enable the government and stakeholders to strategize actions for mitigating climate risks, enhancing resilience, and facilitating the planned relocation of displaced individuals.
* Establish a Comprehensive National Policy on Displacement and Migration thorough review of current policies and approaches, leveraging insights gained from short-term initiatives to formulate a holistic National Displacement and Migration Policy. It is crucial to emphasize that this policy should prioritize people, adhering to the fundamental principles of human rights.
* A climate migration and monitoring cell mechanism needs to be established with linkages with local government, organizations, and CSOs to get consistent data on the number of displaced and migrated people to track their destination.
* It is imperative to establish a financial structure that includes a registry system and a collaborative monitoring task force to track all climate investments, ensuring their efficiency at the national/government level. This approach will help mitigate losses and damages from climate change impacts, consequently reducing the likelihood of displacement and migration. While sector-specific strategies are essential, they must also prioritize meeting the needs of marginalized communities, ensuring fairness, justice, and equity in addressing climate-induced displacement and migration. Additionally, these actions should be responsive to gender considerations.
* Each country should prepare a loss and damage Mechanism including a national funding mechanism that can be linked with global LnD fund. This should be reflected in the national budget system in terms of how climate affected countries are addressing climate induced displacements.
* An Inter-ministerial coordination structure needs to be developed to address complex issues in planned relocation relating to land, livelihoods, shelter, infrastructure, water, sanitation, transport, culture, health and education raised by climate and disaster-related displacement.

**Engagement of communities and regional and international actors:**

* Empowering communities to take the lead in protection can serve as a potent strategy in preventing violence against women and children, especially in the aftermath of disasters.
* Individuals, particularly the youth, can be empowered to effectively address disasters by offering first aid, aiding in search and rescue operations, and assisting local authorities in conducting needs assessments, especially for displaced individuals. This empowerment can significantly help in mitigating the risks associated with displacement and migration.
* A thorough and coordinated consultative process with community people especially vulnerable and marginalized people for including strategic intervention on ‘dignified’ relocation.
* **Regional Cooperation** in managing ‘Commons’ i.e. forest, transboundary rivers and so on is critical for both South and Southeast Asian countries in terms of disaster and also cross border mobility issues due to resource harvesting which is linked to climate change.

**Consideration of specific needs of relocated and affected populations:**

* In addressing displacement and forced migration, it is crucial for the government, agencies, or development actors, who are the duty bearers, to prioritize the active agency of individuals living in poverty. This involves empowering them by raising awareness of their rights. Individuals in poverty, including women, men, youth, and children, can only assert and safeguard their rights when they come together, organize, and mobilize as a united group, understanding their rights and the reasons behind their violation. Additionally, solutions should be community-based, fostering partnerships among people, society, institutions, and the environment to create sustainable alternatives that consider future climate trends. Furthermore, there should be an accountability mechanism in place that ensures transparency across all levels.
* The primary challenge in dealing with a situation involving extensive displacement and migration resulting from climate-induced disasters will be the insufficient infrastructure and amenities. The city will be unable to manage the sudden increase in population and is at risk of collapsing. Hence, while planned to be relocating, there needs to be plan for the proper arrangement so that migrant and host community are not adversely affected.

**Recommendations:**

* Investing effectively in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation is crucial. As the frequency of climate change-induced disasters rises, the risk of loss and damage to assets and livelihoods also increases. Ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of investments is essential to mitigate the risk of climate-induced disasters and assist communities in adapting to a changing climate.
* Creating a Multipurpose Information Center is essential. Identified as key factors exposing displaced and migrated individuals to increased vulnerability and exploitation, the lack of information, availability, and accessibility underscores the need for such a center. It will assist displaced communities in making informed decisions regarding migration, including where to migrate if they choose to do so.
* The main driver of migration from rural areas is the absence of viable livelihood opportunities. Hence, it is crucial to enhance investments in skill development for the most vulnerable communities, particularly young women and men. Additionally, there is a need to boost investment in generating employment at the local and district levels.
* In preparation for climate-induced migration in the future, safeguarding against climatic risks necessitates the implementation of climate-resilient embankments. These structures aim to shield communities, particularly those residing in rural areas near rivers and seas, from tidal surges, increased water pressure, and cyclones. Inclusive protection measures should involve community participation in decision-making processes and provide employment opportunities for the most vulnerable women and men.
* In rural regions, the government should support risk reduction by implementing land use planning informed by risk considerations. Additionally, allocating Khas Land to landless individuals must be done with transparency and accountability measures in place.
* Government investment, along with contributions from the private sector, is crucial for Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) livelihood projects. Incorporation of innovative funding mechanisms engaging Private sector in terms of investment into DRR, and climate change adaptation is crucial. Involvement of private sector will create new employment opportunities in potential growth hubs in all districts of Bangladesh resulting in new livelihood opportunities for displaced people.
* Creating a financial framework that incorporates a registry system and a collaborative monitoring task force involving both public and private sectors is essential. This system aims to track all climate investments effectively to reduce climate-induced migration.
* Use Risk map interactively to identify safe expansion areas enabling relocation while preserving livelihood and culture.
* Interactive and participatory processes can be employed to involve communities in identifying suitable housing options in new locations.
* Engaging with relocated communities to understand their educational needs and preferences can help in establishing educational facilities in new locations.
* Collaborating with relocated communities to assess and address their public service requirements is essential for ensuring a smooth transition. Ensuring that essential services such as healthcare, sanitation, and transportation are available in new locations can help maintain the well-being of relocated populations.
* Implementing health assessments and providing mental health support in pre and post relocation can address physical and mental health needs. Providing mental health support, healthcare facilities, and access to medical services in relocated areas can help individuals cope with the stress of relocation.
* Facilitating community engagement and participation in decision-making processes can help address communal impacts like loss of land, social cohesion and cultural heritage. Involving communities in preserving cultural practices, traditions, and social structures during relocation can help maintain social cohesion and preserve local knowledge and culture.
* Planned relocations should be carried out within a rights-based framework that safeguards both individual and collective civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. this involves respecting the rights of affected populations, including housing, land, property rights, and livelihoods rights.
* Involving affected communities in the decision-making process is crucial. Their voices should be heard, and their perspectives considered to ensure that the relocation process respects their rights and preferences.
* Efforts should be made to preserve the cultural identity of relocated communities. This can be achieved by considering cultural practices, traditions and social structures in the planning and implementation of relocations.
* Empowering communities through participation, access to information, and capacity building can help ensure that relocations are carried out in a manner that respects human rights and cultural identity.
* Legal frameworks should be in place to protect the rights of displaced persons, ensuring that they are not discriminated against and that their rights are upheld throughout the relocation process.
* A Community-Led Protection System should be establishedas an effective means of preventing violence against women and children, particularly during and after a disaster. Furthermore, people, particularly young people, can be equipped to respond to disasters.
* Introduction of Universal Social Protection is required which goes beyond the Social Safety Net Program and adopts the Universal Social Protection system. This social protection includes livelihood generation, social insurance, and a social safety net to address climate-related loss and damage, thereby reducing displacement and migration.
* Technology and data driven approaches are paramount in strengthening early warning system and message dissemination for rapid onset events such as floods, erosion and cyclones and slow onset climate-related hazards such as drought. The system should be supported by effective evidence based/data driven on the number of displaced people or at risk of displacement due to the impact of climate change and slow onset disasters.
* Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Planned relocation needs to be seen from the triple nexus agenda. Core areas of engagement could be early mitigation/ mitigate the immediate needs of the displaced people, include the displaced people in sustainable development and climate action activities, and address recurring drivers of displacement support solutions, and support preparedness including anticipatory action to cope with rising trends. Conflict sensitivity and conflict resolution mechanism between newly integrated and host communities are one of the core areas of sustaining peace in the communities.
* Build resilient infrastructure and housing in vulnerable areas to withstand natural disasters and minimize displacement. This includes investing in early warning systems, cyclone shelters, and flood-resistant housing for communities at risk.
* Adopt gender-sensitive approaches to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls among displaced populations. Ensure access to reproductive health services, protection from gender-based violence, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes.
* Improve access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water for displaced populations, including those living in informal settlements and refugee camps. Ensure that services are inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of displacement status.