

DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORUM

21 CLOUDESLEY ST

LONDON, N1 0HX

00-44-207-837-9212

M 00-44-7778-917133

Email olga.maitland@virgin.net

Patron

Christiano Arnhold-Simoes

President

Lady Olga Maitland

Vice President

Rt. Hon. Lord Lamont of Lerwick

Chairman

Major General Patrick Cordingley, DSO, OBE

Vice Chairman

Rt.Hon. Sir John Wheeler, JP, DL

**ISTANBUL SECURITY CONFERENCE
Baskent University / Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Conrad Hotel, Istanbul**

26th May 2022

**THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION IN
VULNERABLE COUNTRIES –
PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AND SOLUTIONS**

By

Lady Olga Maitland

Scale of the challenge – -

World Bank Migration Report today estimate that 280m people are on the move – a figure that has been rapidly increasing over the decades. A host of reasons, civil wars, major wars, social unrest, grinding poverty, political oppression being just a few..

Climate change migration has a pattern of its own. The movement to another country is less frequent. Today 140 m are displaced by climate change. By 2050 216m will migrate but to mostly to areas within their country not beyond. Today they would be termed as ‘forced climate change migrants’.

Behind that figure lies some analysis.

Disasters vary considerably in their potential to instigate migration – and then to where. Sudden disasters such as typhoons, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, bush fires, are emergency situations removing people to camps for temporary or long term resettlement assistance. A large number do in fact return to rebuild their lives.

In most of these cases, the population do not have the financial resources to move far. They are certainly the poorest and least powerful, without a political voice. They are the marginalised. Limited options with fragile unstable governments often least able to be able to respond until international aid arrives.

Different regions have different responses. If they are hit by drought, loss of livestock and crops, famine, facing starvation, they head for the other rural areas or the cities. The test being, as in the Sahel, where women walk 25k a day to collect water Further than that, they move permanently.

Either they go to another rural area or to a city. This in turn can create social tension which can lead to violence, robbery and so on. Generally it is the men who leave first without dependents. Families try to stay as near to their roots as possible, partly to retain control of homes , protect from squatters, and land, and the type of work they were used to.

Coastal areas swamped by rising sea levels can also push the population away.

There is a pattern.

Worst affected and highly vulnerable to extreme disasters in the near future is the African continent, east, west and centre. Asia has its own vulnerabilities Nepal, Bangladesh, India. But not to forget the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The interesting point is to look at how countries are building resilience to the climate change disasters.

In a crisis, families rely on remittances. These are a lifeline for survival. There is always an upsurge when the need arises. Community networks provide basic coping strategies.

The interesting analysis however lies in looking at countries who are actively building resilience.

Maldives.

They are building better sea defences, elevated buildings, early warning systems , replacing reliance on diesel fuel with solar power, safeguarding precious fresh water supplies.

Fiji – after suffering costly typhoons such as in 2016 when 131,000 were displaced, they set up a Build Back Better programme, strengthening buildings to such an extent that in 2020 when another cyclone hit, the buildings were not damaged.

Dominica has a 2020-2030 plan for robust resilience which includes climate resilient agriculture, and a geothermal power investment.

Sao Tome and Principe, tiny islands in the Gulf of Guinea are boosting sea walls after suffering 10 major floods a year. Further , restoring mangroves to be a breakwater. The same is happening in the west African mainland.

Nepal in 2021 suffered devastating heavy rains leading to floods, landslides, destroying crops. Now they have a \$47b National Adapter Plan to be better prepared in the future.

Switzerland has invested massive funds in an early warning system that predicts landslides, avalanches and floods.

Brazil has a centuries old history of violent floods in the Amazon river basin. Today there are strict regulations on construction on the flood plains. But this does not offset the massive pollution caused by deforestation – an area the size of Kuwait is lost every year to logging. No end in sight in an election year for Bolsonaro.

Japan has perhaps the best early warning system in place of their own experience of a tsunami in 2011. For example, children are trained that on hearing a warning siren they head for the highest point in the neighbourhood.

Cuba follows Japan as one of the most prepared with hurricane sensors installed and a highly developed civil protection committees inspecting houses for safety equipment, identifying where everybody is, forbidden to go to the coast, 48 hours before a hurricane and so on.

All this too in Costa Rica, but going one step further with a rapid detection system for victims, as well as cleansing the neighbourhoods of debris and garbage within 12 hours after the crisis.

Mexico has toughened building its standards. Barbados. Dependent on tourism has a highly developed early warning system since storms are common from June to December.

There are indeed admirable initiatives all over the world, but droughts have caused appalling famine,. In the Horn of Africa 14m face severe food and water shortages with negligible support in the areas most needed for water conservation, drilling of wells and irrigation programmes. Now the loss of Ukraine cereal is forcing people to the brink.

In truth the most vulnerable people and nations suffer most. All initiatives cost money,

At the COP26 Summit in Glasgow, it was the smaller and vulnerable nations especially in the Pacific who cried out for help to finance initiatives, but were not heard.

Pledges made at the previous summit in Copenhagen in 2009 for \$100b a year failed to be met

Did COP 26 make any further progress? Plenty of commitments to slash emissions but did not secure the \$100 b per year as promised in Copenhagen. Extremely alarming as this does not represent progression. Next review in 2023. It logically raises the question as to whether similar long term commitments made will ever come to fruition

According to the World Bank, the real target should be \$2.4 trillion annually. The rich nations have been inadequate and time is running out.

India lags way behind its commitments despite being seventh worst affected by climate change. They are a long way off from the drastic measures needed. President Modi makes pledges for achieving targets in 2070 – way beyond other countries and for all this it remains non-transparent and without verification.

Turkey, after years of tactical delay, has done a U-turn to access growing climate finance flows from the World Bank and European development banks.

So who will pay? How do they pay? With real difficulty.

This should be a topic at Davos. Many of the African countries have run up massive debts suffocating their ability to respond to climate change. Zambia's repayments were four times what it hoped to spend protecting people from extreme weather.

Aid comes with strings attached, hitting the most vulnerable.

The fact is that so far most of the climate finance the world's richest countries have provided has been in the form of loans that pile on more debt. Half of the external debt payments by low income countries are to banks, hedge funds, and asset managers who also have profited from funding fossil fuels on a massive scale.

Zambia has defaulted to Blackrock on repayments owing \$13b. Zambia's borrowing costs are far higher than those faced by wealthy countries. They are not alone. Consequence. No resources for vital climate change initiatives/

Political leaders and chief executives in Davos cannot talk about climate change without talking about debt. If Blackrock and other bond owners really want to show themselves as climate leaders, then they should cancel the debts.

The G20 and IMF looked at restructuring debts in 2020 but nothing has happened since. The institutions have done little to bring the bond holders to the table.

There are other routes meanwhile.

The World Bank Group's Climate Change Plan has committed \$25b annually for resilience projects. Globally \$321b comes from governments.. the rest comes from voluntary aid organisations and private initiatives.

One of the very real challenges is how and to whom should the aid be given? How can we be sure that the aid gets directly to the people who need it.? Who monitors? What oversight is there? What powers are there to ensure it gets to the end users?. Corruption, theft, fraud and looted funds has scaled to appalling levels especially in countries with authoritarian regimes.

According to the United Nations \$2.6 trillion is stolen through corruption and theft. Further in developing countries, funds lost to fraud and corruption are estimated to be ten times the amount of the Overall Development Assistance.

A study by the OECD and the World Bank shows that corruption and fraud in the infrastructure sectors lead to misallocation of public funds and substandard and insufficient services.

Harrowing to hear of food aid for flood victims was looted in February by armed groups in four attacks on two warehouses in south Sudan, depriving 23,000 people in desperate need of aid. Plus two aid workers killed.

Although it is difficult to measure the exact cost of corruption, fraud and theft, due to its hidden nature, it has been estimated that between 10 – 30% of the investment of publicly funded projects are lost through mismanagement and corruption.

To get aid and support to the vulnerable with much more rigor and monitoring is fundamental. The malign actors are out there. They treat economics as a means of control and political power. The aid and support must be carefully designed to get it to those directly in need, by passing governments who are the worst offenders in theft.

The British government has been giving some thoughts to this. Only last week, they announced a new aid package carefully designed to ensure it goes to bilateral programmes on the ground, rather than multilateral organisations and government agencies where the problem is worst. Building partnerships on the ground, working closely with civil society, aid agencies, and ngos. By developing a rigorous monitoring and enforcement of transparency is key to get aid and support to those who most need it.

This way there is a chance that the threats from climate change can be mitigated and lives can be saved. This can only happen if there is a co-ordinated will and determination to see this through by the developed world.

Grand standing at major summits such as Davos this week with fine words alone are an empty vessel. Civil society must press for the united political will to make real the pledges and deliver without a price tag. We do have a voice. We have a responsibility to make use of it. Then we can hold them to deliver the minimal \$100b a year pledge.

Finally beat the corrupt and kleptocrats and deliver direct to those in need.

