Labour migration as a climate change adaptation strategy in the Caribbean

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Housekeeping

• Audio/video from today’s webinar will be available at the events site for the Caribbean Migration Consultations http://cpmg.iom.int/events

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Caribbean Migration Consultations

- Regional dialogue in the Caribbean supported by IOM and UNHCR
- Multi-issue forum for information exchange and capacity building

Visit Caribbeanmigration.org/register
Migration and climate change in the Caribbean

Labour migration and climate change adaptation

The way forward: Challenges and opportunities in the Caribbean
Caribbean small island countries are particularly vulnerable: “many small islands [are] spatially and geophysically pre-disposed to experience adverse effects from multiple shocks (e.g., hurricanes, episodes of heavy rainfall) and stresses (e.g., rising mean annual temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and sea-level rise). The need to examine vulnerability is highlighted by the heavy dependence of many small islands on tourism and agriculture—two climate-sensitive forms of production”.

## Top 10 climate-related disasters for losses as a percentage of GDP 1998-2017

*Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2017, CRED-UNISDR*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and date</th>
<th>Countries/territories affected</th>
<th>Economic losses (billion USDD)</th>
<th>Economic losses (% GDP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Irma – September 2017</td>
<td>Saint Martin</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Irma – September 2017</td>
<td>Saint Martin</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Irma – September 2017</td>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Maria – September 2017</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Ivan – September 2004</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Ivan – September 2004</td>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Georges – September 1998</td>
<td>Saints Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Erika – August 2015</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Mitch – October and November 1998</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Maria – September 2017</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Non-economic damages include detrimental health impacts, forced displacement and destruction of cultural heritages. Projections of increased frequency of the most intense storms at 1.5°C and higher warming levels (Wehner et al., 2018) are a significant cause for concern, making adaptation a matter of survival (Mycoo and Donovan, 2017).”

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 
*Special report on 1.5°C. 2018*
According to the International Displacement Monitoring Center, “Hurricane Irma was the largest disaster event of the year [2017] worldwide, displacing around 2 million people over two weeks in August and September. Hurricane Harvey displaced another 848,000 and Maria around 146,000”.

TEMPERATURE INCREASE

Taylor, M.A. et al. Future Caribbean Climates in a World of Rising Temperatures: The 1.5 vs 2.0 Dilemma. 2018
“On many small islands (e.g., those constituting SIDS), freshwater stress is expected to occur as a result of projected aridity change. Constraining warming to 1.5°C, however, could avoid a substantial fraction of water stress compared to 2°C, especially across the Caribbean region, particularly on the island of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti).

In accordance with an overall drying trend, an increasing drought risk is projected for Caribbean SIDS (Lehner et al., 2017), and moderate to extreme drought conditions are projected to be about 9% longer on average at 2°C versus 1.5°C for islands in this region (Taylor et al., 2018).”

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 
Special report on 1.5°C. 2018
DROUGHTS

Major droughts registered in the Caribbean between 1974 and 2016 of at least one year in duration

"An eventual 1 m SLR could partially or fully inundate 29% of 900 coastal resorts in 19 Caribbean countries, with a substantially higher proportion (49–60%) vulnerable to associated coastal erosion (Scott and Verkoeyen, 2017)."

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Special report on 1.5°C. 2018

Source: Nickolay Lamm at Climate Central
STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES

Source: SEDAC Map Viewer, v2 Caribbean
UNOSTAT (Grenada)
“An eventual 1 m SLR could partially or fully inundate 29% of 900 coastal resorts in 19 Caribbean countries, with a substantially higher proportion (49–60%) vulnerable to associated coastal erosion (Scott and Verkoeyen, 2017).”

**TABLE 1.3: Contribution of Tourism to GDP and Employment, 2015 (percent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contribution to GDP</th>
<th>Contribution to Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2016).*

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Special report on 1.5°C. 2018
“Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”

Sudden-onset events (hurricanes, storms, earthquakes)

Slow-onset factors (sea level rise, desertification)

Deficient adaptation

Inhabitability

Food insecurity and water scarcity

Unemployment

Conflict

Other factors

Human mobility

DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION
DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION

- Migration policies (Global Compact, Migration laws)
- Climate strategies (NDC, Adaptation, Climate Change Laws)
- Disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance (Sendai, GP)
Objective 2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin

Natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation

Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
Bahamas Nationally Determined Contribution:
Human Settlement / Relocation of communities from the shoreline. This has already proven effective.

Haiti Nationally Determined Contribution:
Réduction des risques de désastres dans les zones les plus vulnérables aux inondations, et intégration de migrations (internes et internationales) et réimplantation planifiée de communautés comme stratégie d’adaptation.
“Human migration, whether planned, forced or voluntary, is increasingly gaining attention as a response, particularly where climatic risks are becoming severe. There is medium evidence and low agreement as to whether migration is adaptive, in relation to cost effectiveness and scalability concerns”

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
Special report on 1.5°C. 2018
**Benefits of migration for adaptation:**
- Key benefits for migrants: income and skills
- Also: Education, health

**At the macro level:**
- Filling labour market gaps and broader foreign policy objectives for countries of destination;
- Easing unemployment, poverty, fostering development for countries of origin
Capacities: “Migrating can have mixed outcomes on reducing socio-economic vulnerability and its feasibility is constrained by low political and legal acceptability, and inadequate institutional capacity.”

Policy coherence: “Governance: revising and adopting migration issues in national disaster risk management policies, National Adaptation Plans and NDCs”.

Evidence: “There is a small but growing literature on human migration as an adaptation strategy. Scant literature on the cost effectiveness of migration”.
The Caribbean remains a region of **NET** emigration:

In 2007, the emigration rate from this region was 4 times higher than in Latin America;

**Guyana** and **St. Vincent and the Grenadines** have the strongest emigration rates (10% per year of their population);

**Guyana**: local business taken over by Brazilian emigrants; Emigrants = 60% of the total population;

**St. Vincent**: emigrants = 55% of total population

**Net recipient** are Antigua, Barbuda and Suriname
In absolute terms, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti have the largest diasporas in the world, mostly in the USA;

Guyana and Haiti are the primary countries of intra-regional migration (within the Caribbean and to the USA);

The USA remains the most important destination for migrants in the region and from other parts of the world;
Common challenges:

- Water shortage due to the salinization of drinking water sources, droughts, volcano eruptions, hurricanes and earthquakes;

Cuba and Haiti rank among top ten countries worldwide with the highest levels of disaster-induced displacement;

In the past ten years, an important succession of hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding and earthquakes have adversely affected several countries in the Caribbean including:

- Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Martinique, Haiti; Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Puerto Rico;

Main countries of emigration:

- USA, Caribbean, Canada, UK, Europe;

Challenge: **Insufficient work force for reconstruction.**
Under the CSME, the free movement of persons across the region for:

1. University Graduates
2. Media Workers
3. Sports Persons
4. Musicians
5. Artists
6. Managers
7. Supervisors and other service providers;

- These persons can travel to Member States with only a travel permit;

Challenge:

Need to strengthen single countries’ capacity to support reconstruction efforts in the region;
‘People have been displaced by climate for millennia, but we are now at a particular historical moment, facing a new type of environmentally driven migration that will be faster and more furious. It will require incredible adaptability and political will to keep up with the changes that are forecasted to happen’ (....) ‘Climate refugees are the responsibility of the international community’.

Professor Garcia, Cornell University, 2016.
1. Environmental migration management needs to be in line with Global Compact on Migration's recommendations, as well as human rights frameworks;

2. Programmes should be designed through multi-stakeholder dialogue including governments of countries of origin, destination, employers, migrants and worker representatives, including trade unions;

3. Need for data, particularly on what skills exists and where, availability of labour, of temporary deployment (data should be updated regularly);

4. Acknowledge that labour migration is not a silver bullet; emigration retention should be an option; offer of climate resilient businesses/activities, additional mechanisms of support, along with other humanitarian assistance, adaptation interventions, etc.
Thank you!
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