Disasters and displacement in a changing climate

in a way which facilitates the admission of displaced persons during a disaster.

It is important to note, however, that freedom of movement arrangements are not protection-oriented; rather, they are designed to promote regional development and facilitate the movement of labour between countries. As such, they do not address the particular needs of displaced persons – indeed they may be suspended in times of emergency, such as a disaster, and their operation depends on individuals being able to access identity documents and secure employment. Nevertheless, the relaxation of entry requirements between African states could facilitate ease of movement for those affected, or likely to be affected, by disasters and climate change. For example, in February 2014 the governments of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda signed an agreement to allow citizens to travel between the three countries using national identity cards. At the practical level, arrangements such as these could be used to assist in the admission and management of displaced persons under a temporary protection regime.

The development of formalised temporary protection measures in Africa for people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change could thus significantly improve access to protection for those who are forced to flee across borders. By removing such protection from the realm of ad hoc and informal arrangements, a temporary protection regime could provide more guaranteed access to territory and human rights, and promote the more consistent reception and treatment of disaster-displaced populations outside their countries of origin. In order to do so, however, temporary protection must uphold African states’ existing protection obligations under regional refugee protection and other human rights instruments.

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1. http://tinyurl.com/NansenInitiativeHornConclusion
2. www.refworld.org/docid/52fba2404.html

Climate effects on nomadic pastoralist societies

Dawn Chatty and Troy Sternberg

Oman and Mongolia reflect the modern climatic and social challenges to mobile pastoral livelihoods.

Nomadic or mobile pastoralism has long been a sustainable livelihood in a diverse range of countries because of herders’ ability to move and manage risk in marginal landscapes where domesticated animals efficiently convert limited ecological productivity into sustenance. However, today pastoralism is being seriously affected by new environmental and social forces exemplified by climate change and government policy restricting movement and other practices.

In Oman and Mongolia, the governments encourage settlement or provide only limited support for customary mobile lifestyles whilst favouring extractive industries for tax revenue. At the same time, climate change is affecting pasture quality and water resources and disrupts the rural landscape. Furthermore, mining and large-scale resource extraction competes for, and reconfigures, the land that pastoralists inhabit. This has the effect of changing land use, just as the ability to make a living from animals is being affected by increasing drought, extreme cold, storms and reduced availability of vegetation for livestock herding.

Changing climates have a significant influence on pastoralists who pursue
environmentally dependent livelihoods. In harsh hot or cold landscapes the ability to obtain adequate fodder to fatten animals is the endemic challenge. Shifts in weather patterns, seasonality of precipitation and recharge of sub-surface water sources are vital to the viability of herding.

In Oman, a 0.6°C annual temperature increase and a 21% decrease in precipitation from 1990 to 2008 have intensified water scarcity and increased evapotranspiration in the pastoral interior of the country, resulting in catastrophic storm episodes and reduced ecological productivity. Infrastructure related to extractive industry has also restricted movement and access to water. Mongolia meanwhile has experienced a 2°C warming trend since 1940, recurrent drought, changes in precipitation and in seasonality and reduced water sources. The detrimental impact of a changing climate manifests in the resultant rural poverty and out-migration to cities.

Years go by with rainfall in one region and not in a neighbouring one. With little and highly variable rainfall large areas are needed to support a relatively small herding population. It is inevitable then that most areas will be seldom used because of local drought. The oil extractive industry in Oman operates largely in these same hyper-arid deserts resulting in serious challenges to the resilience of pastoralism and creating substantial vulnerability among these social groups. In Oman and in Mongolia too what might seem to a non-pastoralist an unused site is nevertheless an important part of the overall pastoral economy and land tenure systems.

Whilst in Mongolia pastoral production rather than wage labour remains the major source of income, in Oman wage labour now contributes more to household income than the sale of animals or animal products but the vast majority of that income is channelled in support of their livestock. In Mongolia, policy to encourage mining often disadvantages pastoralists, resulting in reduced access to pasture, rights and empowerment. The ongoing struggle to craft equitable mining laws, benefit the population and both preserve
Guidance for ‘managed’ relocation

Brent Doberstein and Anne Tadgell

While the potential for climate change-related displacement has been recognised for over 20 years, the international community has been slow to develop climate change-specific instruments to guide the relocation process beyond those that relate to displacement generally.

Planned or managed relocation is increasingly being seen as a logical and legitimate climate change adaptation strategy. Although climate change-related migration can occur on a scale ranging from intercontinental to local, the majority of climate change-related movements have been, and are expected to be, within a country or even local in scale. This article looks at some of the existing guidelines, principles and statements of best practice for local and urban managed retreat as a deliberate climate change adaptation strategy for developing country cities.

Careful attention must be paid in the managed relocation process so as to not accentuate some vulnerabilities while reducing others. For example, climate change-related retreat might reduce physical vulnerability to hazard through reduced exposure, while simultaneously increasing social and economic vulnerability through reductions in social capital and/or livelihood opportunities.

The literature on climate change-related relocation divides the concept into realignment and resettlement. Realignment is mostly practised in developed nations, and involves shifting communities away from climate change-threatened areas and restricting development in these risk areas. In less developed nations, the process is often referred to as relocation or resettlement, which is the facilitated movement of populations from an area of high environmental risk to another of lower risk. Resettlement is not a new concept, and has been used in the past for political purposes, conflict avoidance, development projects and disaster risk reduction. Although useful guidance about how best to carry out resettlement exists in these bodies of literature, it is still worth...