***Internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset climate change:***

***Lessons from climate change adaptation and community resilience***

**Submitted to Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons**

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As a globally focused, faith-based humanitarian organization, Church World Service (CWS) has spent nearly 75 years helping communities to transform themselves through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

We believe that creation is sacred, and that we are all called to responsibly steward its gifts to us.

Because of this call, and because the expanding and accelerating climate crisis requires a global response, we join like-minded and like-hearted people, worldwide, to respond. There is need for expertise, creativity and financial resources from as many movements and organizations as possible.

Multi-faceted action to mitigate climate change is critical to avoid catastrophic impacts around the world. Even in a *best-case scenario* – in which humankind limits global warming from climate change to a 1.5o Celsius increase by 2050 – at-risk communities like the ones with which CWS works around the world face the immediate need to adapt.

One way for communities to become more climate resilient is by adapting the ways they use natural resources, especially for small scale farming. This is especially critical for the hundreds of millions of families across the developing world who put food on their tables and earn a living from household gardens and smallholder agriculture. It is critical to share resources and information available at national and global levels with communities and their local government duty bearers, who already face with climate change impacts and must build resilience urgently.

CWS work in in Indonesia’s Sulawesi province gives one example of this effort. Working with our local non-government partner Pusbinlat Motivator, communities and government colleagues, we are making disaster risk management and climate change adaptation a priority.

In the CWS DREAM project, which is funded by our Australian partner, Act for Peace, five villages were recently recognized as Disaster Resilient Villages per Indonesian government standards. Now, each village has formed a Disaster Risk Reduction Forum, and each forum is recognized in an official decree from the head of the village.

These forums are significant because they show us how citizens and their elected leaders are now more aware – because some of the information and other resources from the DREAM initiative – of disaster risks in their communities. Importantly, they have started (i) coping with existing environmental and climate harm and (ii) mitigating future risks using the strategies and plans they have made together.

Forum members include a variety of local stakeholders, including government duty bearers. Together with village leaders and others, they have done village hazard mapping exercises and action planning to develop Community Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans. They have agreed on local policies and protocols that support climate change adaptation and increase community resilience. Now, each CCCAP is being integrated in its village’s development plans so government development plans and systems are modified to support location- and setting-specific adaptation planning and strategies.

This experience in South Sulawesi highlights the importance of centering climate-affected people in planning and decision-making.

Responding to the mobility impacts of climate change must similarly prioritize the voices and participation of directly affected families and communities. Already, far too many families in South Sulawesi, across southeast and south Asia, and around the world have had to make the hard decision to move or have become forcibly displaced, because of the impacts of slow-onset climate change.

In fact, the ways in which climate-related mobility is managed *could* expand safe, dignified livelihood opportunities for people on the move, and for their families back home in places of origin. If left unmanaged, though, climate related migration could lead to new threats, including forced displacement, migration into situations of vulnerability, or being trapped in environmentally fragile and unsustainable hamlets and villages on every continent.

Families’ decisions to move, in whole or in part, in response to slow-onset climate change are typically not as urgent as those of asylum-seekers and refugees fleeing conflict and persecution. Nor are they as dramatic as those of people displaced by sudden-onset weather disasters. Yet, it is critical to prepare and expand response options now. Slow-onset changes are well underway, and scientifically proven and humanly experienced climate change will affect – and in some cases devastate – poor and vulnerable communities increasingly into the future.

All people deserve to lead lives of dignity wherever they are. Most certainly, they should not be forced to move because of preventable and addressable climate change impacts. National governments and global institutions must now act with broad and deep support for climate change adaptation and community resilience.

For those people already moved or moving because of climate change, whether within their own countries or across national borders, we must find new ways – as the CWS Indonesia team has done in South Sulawesi, and other CWS partners are doing in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin American and the Caribbean – to work alongside communities to ensure all people’s safety, dignity and human rights, including the right to work to sustain themselves.

CWS welcomes the UN Special Rapporteur’s focus on internal displacement related to slow-onset natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change, as an important step in ensuring that human rights guide our integrated responses to climate change, resilience and mobility.

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