**Lecture preparation**

for subject **Environmental** **Security**

on topic **Environmental Migration**

**Brno 2020**

**Contents**

Characteristics 3

Definition 3

Legislation 3

The problematic nature of the concept 4

Categorization of environmental migration 5

Causes of environmental migration 5

Natural disasters 6

Progressive evolution of the environment 7

Development projects 7

Industrial accidents 7

Environmental consequences due to conflicts 7

Number and geographical distribution of environmental migrants 8

Negative consequences of environmental migration 8

Prevention of environmental migration 9

The obligation of states to prevent climate change under international environmental law 9

Mitigation and adaptation measures 10

Main used sources 12

# Characteristics

**Learning outcomes:** students know and reproduce the conceptual apparatus, basic legislation related to the topic, are able to describe the mechanisms of functioning and tools for prevention

**The aim of the lecture** is to acquaint students with the issue of environmental migration

**Tasks for students:** prepare for seminar lesson

# Definition

* *"Environmental refugees are persons who have been forced to leave their traditional homes, temporarily or permanently, as a result of significant environmental disturbances (due to natural or man-made forces) which endanger their existence or seriously reduce their quality of life. Environmental damage means any physical, chemical or biological change in the ecosystem (or natural resources) which renders it temporarily or permanently unsuitable for the promotion of human life ..."* (Essam El-Hinnawi, UNEP Special Rapporteur, 1985)
* according to International Organization for Migration (IOM) definition (2008) environmental migrant is *„a person or group(s) of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence“*
* broad definition also considers a person who decides to migrate due to deterioration of living conditions (e.g. air pollution) to be an environmental migrant 🢡 very difficult to distinguish whether persons migrate for economic reasons or for reasons of deterioration of the environment
* different definitions also result in different categorizations of environmental migrants
* forced and unplanned migration is most important for regulation at both international and national levels
* The International Organization for Migration also works with the term resettled for environmental reasons = *“a person who has changed his or her habitual residence either in the territory of one state or internationally, mainly as a result of environmental degradation, damage or destruction, although this may not necessarily be the case, the only motive for such relocation“*
* the term is used as a less controversial alternative to the terms environmental refugee and climate refugee, which have no legal basis in any provision of international law and cannot validly refer to a category of environmental migrants whose transfer is purely forced

# Legislation

* **International law**
* there is a lack of consensus on international law, especially from states' fears of a mass influx of environmental migrants
* **the Geneva Convention (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)** defines a refugee as "*who is outside his or her home country and has legitimate concerns about persecution on racial, religious or national grounds or on the grounds of social affiliation or political opinion"* 🢡 the environmental refugee is not entitled to international legal protection under the Geneva Convention
* **Guiding Principles for Internal Resettlement** (1998), are relevant to cases of internal involuntary migration 🢡 a source of non-binding nature, but enjoys a relatively large authority
* **The African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa 2009** (Kampala Convention) is based on the Guiding Principles for Internal Resettlement
* **National law**

# The problematic nature of the concept

* the concept of environmental migration is not fully developed
* it began to form relatively recently – in the 1980s
* complexity of the phenomenon of migration itself, when, for example, it is very difficult to separate environmental factors from other factors that lead to migration
* migration scientists and environmental scientists work rather separately
* the width of the concept and the diversity of situations it affects
* the actual number of environmental migrants is unclear (often confused with economic migrants + limited information on national movements)
* it is estimated that tens of millions of people can be included in this category
* according to the Red Cross, more people are currently leaving their homes for environmental reasons than because of the war
* the concept is not unequivocally accepted
* there is no uniform terminology (refugees / migrants / resettlers), nor a generally accepted definition (necessary to specify the international legal status of these persons)
* **Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** (1951) - defines the difference between a migrant and a refugee
* if a person meets the definition of a refugee 🢡 he automatically acquires certain rights and his status is governed (unlike a migrant whose fate is decided by nation states and whose departure is voluntary), refugee cannot be refused by international law and must be protected
* the problem is that natural disasters and climate change are not among the reasons set out in the Convention 🢡 they only speak of political persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion
* people fleeing the country due to natural disasters and climate change are not covered by protection
* in Bangladesh, 200,000 people lose their homes every year due to river erosion
* refugee status also does not apply to a citizen of the endangered islands of Kiribati, Nauru or Tuvalu, which has already left 10% of the population in the last decade
* the most endangered are Chad and other Central African countries or states in South and Southeast Asia
* the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that by 2050 there will be 200 million climate refugees

# Categorization of environmental migration

**Proposal of categorization of environmental migrants (Stojanov, 2008):**

* **environmentally motivated migrants**
* voluntary departure due to deteriorating quality of the environment + usually a significant influence of other migration factors (political, economic)
* **environmental resettlers**
* forced departure from home due to danger to life or livelihood due to serious negative environmental changes or events (natural or man-made)
* hesitant environmental resettlers (gradual degradation) x immediate environmental resettlers (sudden event)
* **planned resettlers**
* relocation due to planned development activities that will change the environment in which they live (e.g. construction of a dam)
* **Categorization for internal and external migration**
* **internal migration** – a person does not cross state borders, i.e. he / she migrates within his / her state
* **external migration** – a person crosses state borders
* **Categorization by migration length**
* **short-term –** people move for more than 3 months, but less than   
  1 year
* **long-term –** people move to another country for more than 1 year, with the proviso that the destination country may become their new home in the future
* **permanent**
* **Categorization by voluntariness**
* **voluntary –** it stems from the desire to improve one's economic and other position, it does not mean the possibility to decide completely freely (only between real possibilities)
* **forced –** not based on free choice between real possibilities, migrant is "pushed" out of his / her place of residence for reasons beyond his / her control
* the distinction between voluntary and forced migration is key to activating the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Guiding Principles on Internal Resettlement 🢡 documents intended only for the protection of forced migrants (refugees)

# **Causes of environmental migration**

**Oli Brown (International Institute for Sustainable Development)**

* **climate drivers**
* **climate processes** – sea level rise, salinization of agricultural land, desertification and growing water scarcity
* **climate events** – sudden and dramatic changes in the environment, such as floods, storms, hurricanes and typhoons – are urgent in nature and force residents to leave their homes much more urgently
* **non-climate drivers**

Professor McLeman – **climate-related drivers**

* **sudden-onset events**
* rapid onset, extreme hydrometeorological events and related phenomena, commonly referred to as natural disasters
* the duration and geographical extent of these events can vary, from short and localized events (e.g. tornadoes) to events lasting many days and affecting large areas (e.g. long-lasting precipitation)
* **slow-onset events and conditions**
* gradual changes in the environment, which can range from a few months to several years and usually affect large areas
* **Etienne Piguet**
* natural disasters
* progressive evolution of the environment
* development projects (development projects, large-scale projects)
* industrial accidents
* environmental consequences due to conflicts
* the individual causes of migration are interconnected and cannot be strictly separated 🢡 eg a natural disaster in a country where the government is unable to help people deal with the consequences in the affected area 🢡 was environmental migration caused by a natural disaster or the state's inability to deal with its consequences?

# Natural disasters

* floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides or tropical cyclones, …
* a characteristic feature is a rapid onset
* the devastating consequences depend not only on the intensity of the natural disaster, but mainly on the vulnerability of the affected community
* in the event of sudden disasters, it is usually necessary to seek temporary refuge 🢡 migration mainly takes the form of short-term internal relocation for shorter distances, with a high proportion of the affected population returning to their homes as soon as possible
* long-distance migration is mainly limited by a lack of funding
* natural disasters lead to both temporary and permanent migration
* an example of a natural disaster that spurred migration is the volcanic eruption on the island of Montserrat in 1995, when the southern half of the island became uninhabitable and more than 7,000 people had to leave the island
* According to some authors, in the case of natural disasters, the use of the term environmental refugee is the most relevant, because in these cases the impact of environmental disturbance on the decision to migrate is clear.
* according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, natural disasters affect 144 million people a year and contribute to the resettlement of more people than armed conflicts

# Progressive evolution of the environment

* slow-acting natural processes that are more or less influenced by human activity
* deforestation, salinization, mud clogging, desertification, lack of drinking water, climate change, …
* the most vulnerable group due to long-term degradation processes are poor people whose livelihood is directly linked to the environment
* in the future, this group is likely to become the most important in terms of the number of people migrating due to negative environmental damage
* small island states that are losing territory due to climate change can also be included here

# Development projects

* construction of a dam and hydroelectric power plant Three Gorges Dam in China
* considered by experts from the beginning to be a threat to the environment
* around the dam (the largest hydroelectric project in the world) there is a risk of landslides, erosion, deterioration of drinking water quality and pollution, ecosystem changes and other environmental problems
* more than 4 million people have been displaced
* many have been moved a second time – first because of the construction of the dam itself, second time because of the threat it poses to the environment
* most have invested savings in new housing, from which they are now displaced
* some of the displaced were not provided with the new homes that were promised or compensation

# Industrial accidents

* in particular accidents caused by the chemical industry, transport or nuclear accidents
* accident at a chemical plant in Seveso, Italy (1974)
* chemical accident in Bhopal, India (1984)
* accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine (1986)
* accident at Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan (2011)

# Environmental consequences due to conflicts

* the use of biological weapons, the destruction of the environment during some armed conflicts, and conflicts over natural resources (especially drinking water) are likely to be the most important in the future
* e.g. the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War or the ignition of oil fields in Kuwait
* environmental degradation increases the risk of armed conflict by only 1% 🢡 the main risk factors are poverty, political regime and instability

# Number and geographical distribution of environmental migrants

* the exact number of environmental migrants is not known
* difficult to distinguish environmental factors from economic or political factors
* especially in developing countries, data on migration are difficult to obtain
* inconsistent definition of environmental migrants
* most environmental migrants migrate within their country and are therefore internal migration, for which data are even more difficult to access than external migration
* estimates
* the number was around 25 million in the 1990s
* projected increase to 150 to 200 million in 2050
* at present the number ranges from 15 to 64 million
* 2/3 comes from sub-Saharan Africa (local lack of precipitation, deforestation and soil degradation)

# Negative consequences of environmental migration

* forced environmental migration 🢡 negative impact on the population itself as well as on the environment
* socio-economic impacts (because it increases the demands on urban infrastructure, reduces economic growth, leads to deteriorating health and hygiene conditions and increases the risk of conflict)
* increasing the risk of conflicts and secondary environmental damage in the target area
* negative impact on the exercise of human rights (individual or group)
* environmental degradation due to over-exploitation of natural resources 🢡 exacerbation of existing problems
* soil degradation causing a food crisis or depletion of natural resources associated with population growth
* for example, water scarcity can cause distributional conflicts and social discrimination in access to safe and clean water
* "Water wars" (e.g. the six-day war between Israel and neighboring states in 1967 over the Jordan River is considered by some authors to be the first modern water war)
* UN Security Council 🢡 population movements pose a threat to international peace and security, especially if there are ethnic and social tensions in the destination country 🢡 Africa has the highest risk of conflict – it suffers from climate change (desertification) and has the largest number of fragile states
* conflict in Darfur – climate change has resulted in a violent conflict
* the conflict was originally blamed on existing ethnic differences between Arabs and Africans 🢡 a few years later, the UN Secretary-General acknowledged that the conflict began as an ecological crisis stemming at least in part from climate change 🢡 a study by UNEP showed that there was a very strong link between soil degradation, desertification and conflict
* consequence of migration caused by the implementation of development projects 🢡 people often do not receive sufficient compensation for the loss of their property and effective assistance to start a productive life in the place of new residence
* in addition to the expropriation associated with resettlement, the change of residence carries a number of risks (especially ethnic minorities are exposed to them)
* environmental migration is also closely linked to the protection of human rights
* environmental degradation itself can be an interference with individual and group human rights
* human rights are then compromised during the transfer and when settling in the destination area

# Prevention of environmental migration

* prevention in connection with averting the causes of environmental migration (includes in particular the obligation of states to prevent climate change)
* the obligation of states to prevent climate change under international environmental law
* the obligation of states to prevent climate change related to the protection of human rights
* prevention of environmental migration itself - adaptation to environmental changes so that migration does not occur (mitigation and adaptation measures)

# The obligation of states to prevent climate change under international environmental law

* it is based on international obligations within the framework of international environmental protection
* UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – states recognize climate change and its adverse consequences as a common concern of all mankind
* the aim of the Convention is to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere 🢡 to prevent dangerous consequences
* the Convention contains four main principles:
* **the principle of intergenerational jus**tice – the obligation of states to protect the climate system for the benefit not only of the present but also of future generations
* **principle of common but differentiated responsibility** – responsibility of economically developed countries for increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the obligation to provide assistance to developing countries
* **the principle emphasizes the need to protect**, in particular, those parts of the planet which are **more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change** (especially developing countries) which are more vulnerable due to economic development and geographical location.
* **precautionary principle** – parties should take measures to anticipate, prevent and minimize the causes of climate change and thus mitigate its adverse effects
* the general commitments contained in the Convention are specified in the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – appoints quantitative requirements for reducing greenhouse gas emissions 🢡 the actual fulfillment of commitments lags behind the Convention and the Protocol 🢡 a number of countries have not yet ratified the Protocol and are unlikely to do so
* individuals and peoples whose way of life is inextricably linked to nature (indigenous groups), and coastal and low-lying island states that do not have the economic resources to adapt to rising sea levels – **vulnerable to the effects of climate change**
* climate change affects a large number of human rights
* the obligation of states to take measures to protect their rights from the effects of climate change – measures must be in line with their obligations under the protection of human rights
* The UN Council (2009) adopted a Resolution reaffirming that **climate change has direct and indirect implications for the implementation of human rights**
* states have a duty to ensure that human rights are not violated 🢡 the obligation to prevent climate change is also based on the obligation to protect human rights
* the application of the obligation in practice is difficult 🢡 the causal link between the state's actions and the negative change of the environment due to climate change is difficult to prove
* another problematic aspect is the global nature of climate change
* states have a duty to protect the rights of persons under their jurisdiction
* it is problematic to oblige states to avert climate change in order to protect the rights of people on the other side of the world

# Mitigation and adaptation measures

* climate change mitigation measures (mitigation measures) – efforts to minimize the causes
* the obligation to adopt them is enshrined in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
* States have a range of policies and tools at their disposal to develop climate change mitigation measures
* are necessary to meet the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere
* climate change adaptation and mitigation measures (adaptation measures)
* they concern only the territory and population of the State concerned
* adaptation is generally defined as a set of measures *"to mitigate the current impacts of climate change and increase resilience to future impacts"*
* Adaptation means the adaptation of ecological, social or economic systems in response to the current or expected impacts of climate change, with the aim of mitigating potential damage or even exploiting those impacts.
* example – spatial planning tools, technical measures or early warning systems
* problem – adaptation will often no longer be possible, or will be very costly or unpromising (protection of low-lying areas and island states - costly and in the long run does not lead to effective protection of the population)
* they require sufficient resources on the part of the state - developing countries usually do not have them
* between 1994 and 2003, natural disasters in developed countries resulted in the deaths of an average of 44 people per event, in developing countries the number was 300
* the risk of violations of fundamental human rights by complying with standards ⇨ measures may exacerbate existing social inequalities (e.g. by adopting restrictive measures on food, water and the availability of other resources to support vulnerable groups)

# Main used sources

<https://adoc.tips/environmentalni-migrace.html>

<https://euractiv.cz/section/klima-a-zivotni-prostredi/news/klimatickych-uprchliku-pribyva-narok-na-ochranu-ale-nemaji/>

<http://www.stojanov.org/soubor/Stojanov-Kavanova_2009-EM-geohledy.pdf>

<https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/116237/>

<https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/82591/?lang=en>

<https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/101546/>

<https://is.muni.cz/th/sxj25/Environmentalni_migrace_z_pohledu_prava.pdf>

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi7yfqKgZXrAhUDDuwKHbrvAYAQFjAAegQIAxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.psp.cz%2Fsqw%2Ftext%2Forig2.sqw%3Fidd%3D144688&usg=AOvVaw0FJtZr0a2K2P9iskWweOqt>

<https://www.iom.cz/files/Vykladovy_slovnik_migracni_terminologie_IOM.PDF>

<https://www.mvcr.cz/migrace/clanek/strategie-migracni-politiky-ceske-republiky.aspx>

<https://mapis.vubp.cz/DMU/ClanekDetail.aspx?guidso=fca06f7e-dd53-4838-985d-6a2a6b403f44>