1. Objectives of the meeting

The meeting aims to bring together key stakeholders during the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016 in New York with a view to discussing:

- the impacts of climate displacement on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and the strategy to form a cohesive international approach across current international processes to protect climate displaced people, and
- how countries might best utilise their combined experience of climate displacement to influence a greater UN multilateral response to climate displacement.

2. Introduction

While the drivers of displacement and crisis migration are many and varied, climate change is a threat multiplier, exacerbating the difficulties and challenges faced by the most vulnerable countries and peoples – including women and girls who face terrible threats to their security and rights when migrating. The global community is increasingly recognising the impact of climate change on migration and displacement.

On September 19, on the margins of the UN General Assembly, the UN will host a high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants. In preparation for this meeting, the UN Secretary General issued the report ‘in safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants’.\(^1\) In his report the Secretary General identifies climate change as a factor which will drive future human mobility:

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\text{Large movements of people will continue or possibly increase as a result of violent conflict, poverty, inequality, climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation}'
\]
This statement is also reflected in the Outcome Document\(^2\) for 19 September 2016 high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants which notes that:

> Some people move in search of new economic opportunities and horizons. Others move to escape armed conflict, poverty, food insecurity, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations and abuses. Still others do so in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters (some of which may be linked to climate change) or other environmental factors. Many move, indeed, for a combination of these reasons.

The elements listed above that push increased migration namely conflict, poverty, food insecurity, persecution, terrorism, human rights violations and disasters are further exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

We have also seen climate displacement being tangentially considered in other multilateral processes such as the Task Force on Displacement being created by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism, under the UNFCCC, which was mandated at COP21; the Global Forum on Migration and Development which will take place in Dhaka, Bangladesh in December 2016; and the Nansen Initiative which was finalised in December 2015 and is now continuing as the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

At a time when the policy responses to the issue of migration and refugees are being discussed by the international community, this meeting will bring together representatives of countries that are most affected by climate displacement. The meeting will provide an opportunity to frame a discussion around the practical experiences of those most impacted and to ensure a people centred approach to the issue of climate displacement. The meeting will provide an important opportunity for some of the countries that are affected or have high potential threats of climate displacement to continue to demonstrate leadership in relation to the impacts of climate change including displacement.

### 3. Context

Climate displacement is a growing issue faced by millions of people and its impacts can be felt at the international, regional, national and sub-national levels. It has huge cross-border implications. The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted that ‘vulnerability is inversely correlated with mobility, leading to those being most exposed and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change having the least capability to migrate’\(^3\). Despite this inequality, climate displacement has, to date, been dealt with in an ad hoc manner in international and domestic fora. The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice has released a Position Paper outlining some of the most pressing concerns on climate displacement.

As climate change disproportionately affects the socio-economic development of the most vulnerable groups of the countries in the world including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, climate-induced migration both within and across the borders in those countries deserve immediate attention and

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effective response from the international community. Given the relatively high proportion of their land that is classified as dryland, LLDCs are severely affected by occurrences of extreme weather patterns, desertification and land degradation. Some LLDCs are also affected by flooding, including glacial lake outburst. Influx of “environmental refugees” put additional strain on already stretched public infrastructure and could potentially raise conflicts. SIDS are seriously affected by displacement associated with floods and storms. Between 2008 and 2014, displacement level in SIDS caused by disasters was three times higher than the global average, relative to their population sizes. For LDCs, impact of environmental change on migration will increase in the future, and there will be millions of people who are unable to move, the so-called “trapped populations”, due to their lack of capacity to deal with climate change effects.

As the impacts of climate change will be more keenly felt in the decades to come, it is critical that comprehensive, coordinated and targeted solutions are found to address climate displacement, particularly for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. These solutions will be best where they incorporate a human rights based approach and are couched in the principles of climate justice.

Responding to climate displacement is complex and requires a multifaceted strategy. A climate justice approach which links climate change, development and human rights provides a useful framework to guide this response. While the international community has engaged in developing some responses, these need to be linked, built upon and expanded. Populations that have been displaced as a result of climate change as well as populations who are at a high risk of displacement need to be identified and engaged to develop strategies and deliver rights protections relevant to their situation.

Progress has been made, including UNFCCC resolutions which have acknowledged the need for more work, engagement from the Human Rights Council and its special procedures and the conclusion of the Nansen Initiative with an ‘Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disaster and climate change’.

There is a clear global recognition of the need to address climate displacement. Part of this recognition needs to be that at its most basic level the best approach is one that achieves the goal of the Paris Agreement that is holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C. This will limit the impact of climate change, and in turn limit the number and severity of climate induced displacement worldwide. Additionally, more coherent and coordinated efforts at the global level need to be made to avoid siloed approach in order to deliver effective responses to vulnerable populations. As such progress made under these frameworks must be consolidated and built upon. Climate displaced people have rights; countries already have commitments to respect them. However, the issue remains in the identification of key gaps and the agreement by countries and the international community to address them within existing international frameworks. This dialogue offers an excellent opportunity to bring together countries facing climate displacement, relevant development partners and various interested stakeholders to brainstorm on a coherent approach, which would contribute to the multilateral processes to find better solutions for climate displacement.
4. **Format of the meeting**
The format of the meeting will include presentations on climate displacement from affected countries, delivering examples of current vulnerabilities and responses.

The meeting will then be undertaken in a roundtable, co-moderated by the hosts, to foster dialogue on developing a cohesive approach from countries vulnerable to climate displacement.

This meeting will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

5. **Inputs**
A discussion paper on Climate Displacement will be circulated in advance.

6. **Agenda**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>Opening Remarks Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.03</td>
<td>Opening Remarks Mrs. Mary Robinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.06</td>
<td>Two country presentations on experience of climate displacement (7 mins each, TBC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>Roundtable commences, co-moderated by Mrs. Mary Robinsons and Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya</td>
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<td>14.50</td>
<td>Mrs. Robinson summarises discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.55</td>
<td>Closing remarks Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Meeting closes</td>
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