

# ACCOUNTABLE, ACCESSIBLE ADAPTATION

## A GLOBAL CLIMATE STRATEGY FOR NEW ZEALAND

MAY 15 2018

### COHERENT CLIMATE POLICY

New Zealand has set out an ambitious climate change agenda to realise a net-zero emission economy by 2050. This goal will be articulated in law, in the form of New Zealand's Zero Carbon Act.

New Zealand is right to be ambitious in tackling climate change, but we cannot succeed in isolation. If we intend for our domestic targets and efforts to have an impact on this global threat, then we must complement our efforts at home with greater contributions to tackling the climate challenge abroad.



As champions for climate action, New Zealand and its Zero Carbon model will be an example for other developed economies to emulate. But New Zealand's action cannot be restricted to emission mitigation efforts. We must also take responsibility for our past emissions, and the climactic changes to which we have contributed. **New Zealand's global strategy must also include commitments to adaptation** - helping the world's most vulnerable communities adjust to the impacts of climate changes on their land, lives and livelihoods that are happening now, and have already happened.

**THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT MUST MATCH ITS BOLD EMISSIONS REDUCTION AGENDA AT HOME WITH AN EQUALLY AMBITIOUS CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY ABROAD. THIS STRATEGY MUST BE BUILT AROUND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.**

### PACIFIC ADAPTATION FOCUS

Adaptation requires us to think of the effects of climate change not only on the planet, but also on people. Climate change is not just an environmental crisis, it is a human rights crisis as well. For many of our Large Ocean State (LOS) island neighbours in the Pacific, the effects of climate change are reducing peoples' access to nutritious food and safe drinking water. It has robbed many of their ability to make a livelihood, as the productivity of the sea and agricultural land declines. Climate change is displacing people from their homes, and in the process

robbing them of community, culture, heritage and even national sovereignty, identities and citizenship.

There are two adaptation issues where size doesn't matter; where action by New Zealand in the Pacific can set the good practice standard for the world, and in doing so, have a disproportionate global impact in the fight against climate change. **These issues are climate-induced migration and climate finance.**



## NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Helping the world's most vulnerable adapt to the locked-in impacts of climate change is part of the commitment New Zealand's Parliament made when it ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change in October 2016. But New Zealand needs to up its game when it comes to adaptation. Only 20% of New Zealand's current climate financing is directed to adaptation, versus 80% that is directed towards the mitigation of emissions.



New funding will be essential to an effective adaptation strategy, but so too are new policy ideas. Climate change is transforming some societies in ways that defy the current international system's ability to manage. Millions are displaced by climate-related events every year, stretching the ability of governments and multilateral organisations to cope. Some low-lying Pacific islands and island nations face a truly existential threat, as storms, sea level rise, salt water intrusion and shifting weather

patterns render their homes uninhabitable. Some Pacific atoll nations, including Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands may disappear altogether. Other atoll populations in Papua New Guinea, the northern Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Solomon Islands are equally at risk.

Yet, no legal safeguards or systems currently exist to protect these vulnerable individuals displaced by climate change, once their island homes are gone.

Oxfam New Zealand is pleased to provide its vision of what a complementary foreign policy component for New Zealand's domestic climate strategy can and should look like. Our vision is grounded in existing initiatives around the world through which New Zealand can leverage its global position.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Photo credit: Rodney Decker, Oxfam Australia. **Photo 1:** In Kiribati, Ngaunta lenraoi stands where her grandmother's house once was, before a king tide destroyed the village. "I remember seeing all the houses ... floating in the water. They lost everything," says Ngaunta. **Photo 2:** A mangrove plantation in Funafuti atoll, Tuvalu, started in 2007, to reduce the risk of coastal erosion. **Photo 3:** "Our culture and our traditions are so valuable. They are part of our [Tuvalu] identity. We cannot leave that behind," says Niu loane.

## CLIMATE MIGRATION

### GLOBAL PROBLEM...

There were 24.2 million new displacements associated with natural disasters worldwide in 2016, the vast majority (97%) triggered by climate and weather-related disasters, including storms, floods and wildfires.

By one estimate, in the long term, sea-level rise resulting from 2C of warming could submerge land that is currently home to 280 million people worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

Pacific islands are at high risk from climate-induced displacement. Fiji and Tonga were two of the 10 countries with the largest per capita disaster displacements in 2016.<sup>3</sup>

As sea levels rise and Pacific weather patterns change, some Pacific Islanders will have no alternative to forcible, permanent displacement – into cities, onto new island homes or in some cases, to new countries altogether.<sup>4</sup>

Presently, no legal frameworks exist to protect the mobility, citizenship, economic or cultural rights of climate-induced migrants.

### ... NZ SOLUTION

It is necessary to plan now to ensure that people forced to move are able to migrate safely, with dignity and on their own terms. New Zealand needs **protect the rights of Pacific Islanders forcibly displaced as a result of climate change** by:

**Focusing New Zealand's climate financing on the most vulnerable populations**, to ensure those at greatest risk from climate-induced displacement can remain in their home communities as long as possible, and ease their transition and settlement to new host communities – whether neighbouring islands, urban areas or other Pacific nations.

For New Zealand, **this means developing a long-term climate migration strategy that encompasses the many paths climate migrants will take in the Pacific** – coast to highland; rural to urban; island to island; country to country – and the unique risks each path poses for human rights – loss of citizenship, trafficking, forced displacement, loss of culture, lands, livelihoods, and language.

**Expanding visa pathways for the safe and dignified movement of climate-affected Pacific islanders** across borders to New Zealand is a potentially valuable component of a broader adaptation strategy. But migration initiatives must incorporate the needs of the most vulnerable – women, girls, boys, people with disabilities, the elderly and people living in poverty – and ensure that access, support and protection through these pathways is provided for all;

Resettlement works best when transitional support, development assistance and culturally appropriate resettlement alternatives are provided. New Zealand's approach must **include engagement with diaspora groups in New Zealand and listening to the voices of affected communities** – including women, girls and boys, people with disabilities, the elderly and people living in poverty – to ensure none are left behind, and that all can exercise influence over when, where and how they will move, with adequate and appropriate support systems and programmes in place for their resettlement.

**Championing the rights of climate migrants in multilateral and regional forums** to develop new protections for the individual political, social and economic rights of those displaced by climate change, as well as the collective cultural and self-determination rights of climate change-affected nations.

**New Zealand should champion the rights of climate migrants in multilateral forums, starting with explicit member state commitments** to ensure the safety, legal status and dignity of climate-displaced within the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**,<sup>5</sup> currently under negotiation through the United Nations.

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam (2017), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> IDMC and NRC, '2017 Global Report on Internal Displacement,' From IDMC website, accessed January 17, 2018: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/downloads/IDMC-GRID-2017-Highlights\\_embargoed-EN.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017/downloads/IDMC-GRID-2017-Highlights_embargoed-EN.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> ODI, *Climate Change, migration and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> The current draft of the Global Compact on Migration includes a number of objectives relating to averting, minimizing, and addressing displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change, including: greater investment in adaptation and disaster risk reduction; greater analysis and information sharing to understand climate migration; using practical measures to facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy;

## CLIMATE FINANCE

### GLOBAL PROBLEM...

Many communities at most risk of displacement, including in Large Ocean States (LOS) in the Pacific, continue to face considerable challenges in accessing international climate finance and support with adaptation measures that would serve to minimise the risks of displacement.

2018 marks two years before the 2020 Paris Agreement deadline when developed countries have committed to jointly mobilise \$100 billion per year to support climate action in developing countries – with a balance between finance for adaptation and mitigation.

Adaptation costs alone in developing countries are expected to be \$140–300bn (USD) a year by 2025/30, yet only an estimated 20% of New Zealand’s current climate finance goes to this critical area.<sup>6</sup>

While globally the share of development aid directed to climate finance is rising, overall aid budgets are not. This means that climate finance developing countries receive is at risk of displacing development spending on education, health, and other lifesaving areas.

Migrants themselves offer a source of funding for adaptation in the Pacific. Remittances from diasporas account for nearly 15% of GDP in Kiribati, 25% in Samoa, and 40% in Tonga, far exceeding official aid flows.<sup>7</sup>

improving availability of information on regular migration options; and providing protection for people forced to leave their countries do to sudden onset disasters and slow-onset degradation. The Compact can be strengthened by, among other measures, explicitly ensuring nonrefoulement for people displaced by disasters and climate change.

<sup>6</sup> Oxfam, ‘Climate Finance Shadow Report 2018: Assessing Progress towards the \$100 Billion Commitment,’ From Oxfam website, accessed 5 May 2018, [https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/bp-climate-finance-shadow-report-030518-en.pdf](https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-climate-finance-shadow-report-030518-en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Barnett, Jon and Chamberlain, Natasha, ‘Migration as Climate Change Adaptation: Implications for the Pacific,’ in Burson, Bruce (ed), *Climate Change and Migration: South Pacific Perspectives* (Wellington: Milne Print, 2010), p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett, Jon, Webber, Michael, ‘Accommodating Migration to Promote Adaptation to Climate Change,’ World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5270, April 2010. P. 23.

### ... NZ SOLUTION

**The NZ Solution: New and additional government funding** is needed to help Pacific Island communities adapt to the locked-in consequences of climate change – on their oceans and shorelines, their lands and livelihoods, their individual rights and communal wellbeing, including:

**Climate finance for projects that are appropriate for the local context** with a specific focus on participation of women giving them a voice in climate proofing the Pacific.

**Increase New Zealand’s** climate change financing, focusing new and additional money for adaptation, towards achieving a 50/50 balance between adaptation and mitigation programming.

**Committing to future increases of climate finance as part of an overall aid budget that is increasing at least at the same rate as climate finance.**

**Improving transparency and accounting standards** around New Zealand’s new and additional climate financing, with robust reporting commitments within the **Zero Carbon Act**.

Diaspora communities often initiate collective action to support home communities. Networks of migrants have been known to pool resources and invest in community projects such as schools and clinics.<sup>8</sup> As such, there is potential for governments in both countries of origin and destination to **engage diaspora as partners in adaptation financing and programming, for example, supporting the transition and settlement of climate migrants.**