SUMMARY REPORT FROM COP19 DIALOGUE ON

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITY-BASED RELOCATION: SUPPORTING ADAPTATION, PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

The following is a summary report from the *Warsaw Dialogue*, which provided an opportunity for participants with diverse perspectives on climate-induced displacement and relocation to share their knowledge and expertise. The workshop was part of a larger initiative on climate change and community-based relocation, which is part of the Many Strong Voices (MSV) Programme. The MSV programme is an alliance of people and organizations in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) collaborating to address the challenges of climate change.

This report reflects the points raised by and discussions among workshop participants, and does not reflect the views of MSV, CIEL or GRID-Arendal.

INTRODUCTIONS /OVERVIEW OF AGENDA AND WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

John Crump provided an overview of Many Strong Voices; Alyssa Johl provided an overview of MSV's initiative on community-based relocation, which is intended to connect and build the capacity of communities that are relocating (or anticipate the need to relocate). MSV launched the initiative in September 2012, when it brought community leaders from Newtok, Alaska, and the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea together to share their experiences with community relocation.

The objectives of the COP19 workshop and the broader initiative are to: (1) learn how informed and participatory decision-making can guide community relocations and help minimize any adverse effects; and (2) assess the needs of communities to better understand what tools and resources are needed to ensure that climate-affected communities can make informed decisions with respect to relocation. The MSV initiative is intended to complement other work being done on this important issue by providing opportunities for dialogue and information sharing.

SESSION 1: RELOCATION IN THE ARCTIC, SIDS AND OTHER VULNERABLE REGIONS

Discussion guided by the following questions: Where communities are relocating (or are under threat of relocation) and who is affected? How are decisions regarding adaptation and relocation being made within these communities?

Ewan Cameron and David Sheppard from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) provided an overview of SPREP and its efforts to support adaptation and build resilience to climate change in the Pacific region through the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Programme. They also showed a short video, *Vital Water*, portraying how the people of Lofeagi, Tuvalu are making changes to the way they live to save their future and their destiny. The video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri2SeIgJiXg.

David Sheppard pointed out that migration due to climate change is a very sensitive topic. He said initiatives have to be driven by countries and communities. Migration happens within a country and between countries. There is a key role of non-state actors and there are many legal issues, such as land tenure, migration laws, etc.

Peter Emberson from the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) presented on climate-induced displacement in the Pacific and related work that PCC has done in collaboration with the World Council of Churches, focusing specifically on the communities of: Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea; Vunidogoloa Village, Fiji; Narikoso Village, Fiji; and Funafuti Atoll, Tuvalu.

Peter also discussed Fiji's first national summit on climate change held in October 2012, which included a workshop on climate-induced relocation. One outcome of this workshop was that government officials decided to develop a national relocation policy and guidelines for those who are displaced by climate change (PCC has been an integral part of this process).

Plenary discussion on what's needed to protect the rights of those displaced by climate change

International Finance

- There is a significant need for international finance given that the cost of relocation is extremely high (e.g. estimate of $400 million for Kivalina, Alaska); thus far, many communities have had to cover the expenses themselves but this is not feasible for most communities (or their countries).
- This highlights the need for adequate climate finance, in particular the need for developed countries to meet their commitment to mobilize $100 billion in climate finance per year by 2020 (assuming that adaptation funds can be used for internal displacement and relocation).
- Discussions on loss and damage also highlight the need for scaled-up financing on mitigation and adaptation to prevent further harms and build resilience of vulnerable communities, given that people in the Pacific (and elsewhere) would rather stay in their homes.
- It is important to note that financing is different for displacement/relocation versus climate-related natural disasters. For example, after the 2005 tsunami, the majority of new facilities in the Maldives were paid for by the Red Cross; but in Fiji, communities had to build a seawall around the island without much assistance.

International Policy Approaches

- There are three entry points/opportunities for engagement in the UNFCCC process:
    - National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) process: Developed countries have the money to deal with this problem and developing countries lack the resources – if displacement and relocation are included in NAPAs, then that's one way to access funds. Such references to relocation are included in the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu NAPAs.
    - Adaptation Framework (Cancun Agreements): Paragraph 14(f) emphasizes the need for countries to take measures with respect to displacement, migration and planned relocation
    - Loss and Damage (Decision 3/CP 18): This decision calls for work to understand the impacts of climate change on patterns of migration,

displacement and human mobility (paragraph 14), but not many are talking about it. So far, the discussion has been largely focused on the impacts of extreme weather events and not on slow-onset events.

SESSION 2: POLICY GAPS/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Discussion guided by the following questions: What frameworks exist to support affected communities and their decision-making with respect to international displacement and relocation? Where are the gaps? What information and other resources are needed to allow communities to make informed decisions with respect to relocation?

Plenary discussion

Role of national governments/international institutions

- We need a more coordinated discussion among policymakers; we also need more discussion of what's needed with respect to adaptation and resilience so people can stay in their traditional homes longer.
- Concerning intergovernmental cooperation and indigenous rights, one positive example is what's happening in Washington State, USA, where there is a good relationship between government and tribes, and tribes are working with universities to be more progressive than the government. Tribes are developing their own adaptation plans, leading by example.
- In countries like Bangladesh & China, there is a need for intergovernmental cooperation; difficult because this issue is highly politicized because of colonialism.
- National government is critical to this discussion and can make a national strategy on relocation, but such policies must be placed under national plan and not specifically within a climate change or adaptation policy/framework. Relocation is a multi-sectoral issue, needs to be addressed by different parts of government and different mechanisms.

Impacts of decision-making/governance with respect to community relocation

- In Fiji, the relocation site was chosen by the government but it was not attractive for fishermen; the Catholic Church will provide alternative area.
- In Alaska, people are considering where to move; in one village, 20 families reestablished themselves, and government stepped in to help afterwards, having given no previous assistance.
- Traditional/cultural identify can be lost through displacement and relocation; effective investments that work in the long term and include traditional/local knowledge are needed (communities bring knowledge and we bring funding).
- In Shishmaref, Alaska, there are unique and distinctive art forms/styles that will be lost with relocation.
- Many Alaskan communities live on the coast as a result of colonization (they were moved against their will with no discussion of the human rights implications); now that they face coastal erosion and flooding, many villages need to relocate but don't have the necessary resources

- Experiences with relocation largely depend on whether there was a choice (if there's a choice, then voluntary relocation; if there's no choice, then involuntary/forced relocation). Even in the best case when peoples' voices are driving the process, relocation can be traumatic.
- In China, nomads were forcibly removed from certain areas, then national policy aimed for their complete removal from grasslands by 2030/2050. Mining companies are now coming in to drill the areas, similar to situation with Native Americans, where mining companies have come in to drill their sacred mountains and lakes. Tibetan nomads are used to adaptation, but many are starting to move to urban areas.

Gaps in existing frameworks on displacement and relocation

- Peninsula Guidelines offer a recent assessment of human rights obligations in the context of internal displacement and relocation.
- With respect to lessons learned from existing frameworks, in Fiji, SPREP has adopted a multi-sectoral approach. They have established an assessment framework and indicators, which show different levels of need and actions that are required at the community level. So far, they have not conducted many assessments but this framework could provide a good basis for assessing needs related to relocation.
- There is a need for a need for collaboration and communication within a country but also within diverse sectors as a means to inform empowerment; we know people and voices are important but how can we make this a reality?

SESSION 3: NEXT STEPS

Discussion guided by the following questions: Is there a need for regional consultations with affected communities and their representatives? Is there a need to form a broad network to share information and best practices on community-based relocation? Are there other needs: Research? Advocacy? Capacity-building? Institution/framework building?

- We need to consider what the international community can contribute beyond financing; we can push this dialogue further along with minimal funds. That said, we need targeted finance so certain steps get implemented and pushed forward.
- Given that the loss and damage mechanism could take 15-20 years or longer to deliver finance for slow onset changes (presumably including funds for displacement and relocation), we need to consider solutions that are closer to the ground that could produce more short-term results.
- Communities lead by example; the people who are living and surviving from these impacts are a very important component; having community voices on the ground is what matters.
- Response from UNFCCC, IOM, UNHCR, UN-OSHA and others are strong at the international but even more so at the regional level. Given significant (largely political) roadblocks at the international level, it's clear that more focus and interest is needed at the regional and local level.

- Information-sharing networks (e.g. adaptation network) are useful so everyone can share something that will be beneficial to others. For example, an Asian adaptation network hosts information regarding national framework policies and projects in the Pacific. The network is intended to provide an overview of what already exists, so agencies/orgs can avoid duplication and develop complementary activities; good initiative in theory but hasn't worked as well in practice.
- A recent paper on indigenous forms of knowledge (based on action pledges made by members of the Nairobi Work Programme) focuses on national and regional processes. In addition, the Parties have previously decided that all Nairobi Work Programme should integrate gender issues, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and the role of and impacts on ecosystems. It may be possible to connect this discussion to the one on community-based relocation.
- Disconnect between policy and reality is a major challenge; for small islands, the cost is oftentimes 10 times the budget they're working with, so there is a critical need to raise awareness of the community needs with policymakers. For example, in the Caribbean, tourism drives national economies but planning doesn't take into account coastal erosion and other climate impacts; this means that policymakers don't look at climate change or coastal erosion and are building an economy based on something that may not exist in 10-15 years.

Discussion on how we define the scope of loss and damage and adaptation, and whether the conditions (i.e. slow onset changes/events) that create the need for displacement/relocation fall within loss and damage or adaptation

- Some shared the perspective that relocation seems to fall along a spectrum depending on the circumstances.
    - Loss and damage: If you can't adapt to something, then you've surpassed adaptation are in unavoidable loss and damage. When there is no longer a choice and/or no ability to return home in the near future, then this is likely qualifies as loss and damage.
    - Adaptation: Some displacement – such as seasonal displacement – may qualify as adaptation.
- Another suggested that adaptation prevents displacement and migration from taking place, and therefore forced displacement falls within loss and damage. Opportunistic (i.e. voluntary) migration is completely different and should be distinguished.
- Another suggested that the difference between relocation being characterized as loss and damage or adaptation depends on the resilience of the people who are relocating. For example, Mauritanians rely on nomadic pastoralism, and are far more resilient than those who rely on supermarkets.
- Another suggested that it depends on whether relocation is by choice (voluntary vs. involuntary). Adaptation must be the first strategy, people want to live on their own lands and territories. For example, the people of Tuvalu could buy land in Fiji but they are reluctant to move because it would result in loss of identity.

Discussion on what is needed to protect communities who need to relocate

- Insurance and reinsurance industry is often characterized as the bad guys, but they need to be included in this discussion, otherwise you can't change their behavior.
- Tobin tax is a good approach; every time industry spends money on equipment, 0.001% goes into adaptation fund. The premise is that any industry (e.g. tourism, extractives) that operates in the country is subject to the Tobin tax. Cumulative effect could be quite large.
- In the Pacific, we must be pragmatic in our approach, given how quickly some small islands are going under water. We need to educate people about the impacts of climate change on their lives and livelihoods.

Concluding remarks/next steps

- Despite the vast distances between the Arctic and the SIDS and many places in between, there are many similarities and convergences, which tells us that peoples and cultures are not very distant at all. However, this is not a message that resonates in the international negotiations. We need to make sure that this message is heard, many such opportunities to advance this message have been discussed today.
- Next steps/opportunities for future collaboration in this group
    - Communication/advocacy: Gather information on what's happening in vulnerable communities as a means to raise awareness with policymakers, for example, through the NAPA process, adaptation framework, and loss and damage mechanism. With partners and collaborators, explore means of linking displacement and relocation to UNFCCC process.
    - Capacity-building: Assist and build the capacity of national governments to develop relocation policies and guidelines, drawing on the experiences and lessons learned of those who have already done so.
    - Coordination: Create a network/listserv to continue this dialogue in this group and others with diverse backgrounds and expertise and share information on issues related to climate-induced displacement and relocation.