



Civil Society Key Advocacy Messages

GFMD Roundtable 4: Climate Change and Safe Labour Routes

Disclaimer: The following content reflects only the outcomes of the GFMD Civil Society Thematic Dialogues. Therefore, the challenges and opportunities outlined are limited to what emerged during the discussions. These ideas may evolve as further analysis and discussions take place.

Challenges

1. **Lack of political will and political inertia around addressing climate change and its negative impacts**
 - a. Conflicting economic interests continue to hinder mitigation efforts, delaying urgent actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This stalling prevents a fast, fair, and equitable fossil fuel phaseout, which is essential for combating climate change's root causes.
 - b. Continued neglect of durable and sustainable adaptation measures leaves communities increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation efforts remain fragmented and insufficient without targeted policies and funding, failing to protect those most affected by rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and resource scarcity.
 - c. Adaptation finance remains critically underfunded, significantly impeding the implementation of essential adaptation projects. These also still rely heavily on grant-based models with no clear return on investment (ROI) to mobilise private finance. While mitigation efforts often attract funding due to their potential for long-term economic returns, adaptation projects focus on urgent, community-driven solutions with limited profit potential, rendering them less attractive to private investors. This underfunding severely affects vulnerable communities that lack resources to develop resilient infrastructure, protect ecosystems, and adapt agricultural systems.
 - d. Annex II countries' failure to fulfil climate finance commitments compounds the adaptation finance crisis, as developed nations have not met their pledges to provide sufficient support for mitigation and adaptation. At COP29, the promise of \$300 billion highlighted the significant shortfall, as it remains far from the trillions required to address the climate crisis effectively. This inadequate funding exacerbates global inequalities, disproportionately harming nations experiencing severe climate impacts despite their minimal contributions to emissions. Meanwhile, governments often evade or shift responsibility for financing and implementation, as seen in COP29, further delaying urgent action and perpetuating disparities in global efforts to combat the crisis.
2. **Continued false or oversimplified perceptions of migrants affected by climate change**
 - a. The complex, context-specific nature of climate impacts on migration (e.g. differences between sudden and slow-onset disasters) contributes to a lack of recognition of different forms of climate-driven migration; people compelled to move due to loss of livelihood and other climate impacts are still often considered "voluntary" migrants.
 - b. There is a lack of awareness about who climate migrants are and the extent to which communities will be affected by climate change. Climate migration is not a uniform

experience; it is shaped by intersecting factors such as gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, nationality, and pre-existing social inequalities. The impacts of climate change—whether through sea-level rise, extreme weather events, or environmental degradation—are not equally felt across communities. Marginalised groups, including women, children, the elderly, Indigenous and Local Communities, and people with disabilities, are disproportionately affected due to limited access to resources, decision-making power, and adaptive capacity.

- c. Anti-migration and xenophobic narratives hamper progressive and human rights-based policy development aimed at responding to the needs of people moving because of climate change.

3. Low prioritisation and lack of protection focus in international migration, refugee, and environmental frameworks, including a lack of consideration of the most vulnerable

- a. Refugee and asylum systems are not responsive to climate considerations.
- b. Continued lack of consistent, rights-based, gender-responsive protection frameworks and regular pathways for international migrants within and across regions.
- c. Climate justice and the intersectional impacts and vulnerabilities of climate change and climate mobilities are still understudied and under-considered in policy-making. Migrant women and girls, in particular, face disproportionate vulnerabilities due to intersecting factors such as gendered social roles, limited access to resources, and heightened risks of exploitation during migration.
- d. The continued perception that some migrants or refugees are ‘more justified in migrating’ than others- risk of creating a hierarchy between migrants that will affect their human rights and discrimination.

4. Lack of sustainable, durable, inclusive and rights-based pathways and over-emphasis on labour as a ‘migration as adaptation’ solution

- a. Over-emphasis on temporary and skilled labour pathways often are not long-term or durable (e.g. do not allow families to migrate with them, do not include a path to regularisation, are contingent on the employer), and are not rights-based (i.e. labour rights are often violated).
- b. Right to stay and solutions for adaptation in place are still largely overlooked, disproportionately affecting Indigenous populations and those most vulnerable, and risks forcing people to move instead of providing adequate measures for desired adaptation.
- c. Labour migration solutions often fail to protect vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, primary caregivers, and people with disabilities who account for at least 16% of the world’s population. These groups are frequently excluded from migration pathways that prioritise economically active individuals. In countries like Australia, people with disabilities and their families face significant barriers when applying for visas due to the Migration Act 1958’s strict health requirements. These requirements assess whether an applicant’s condition might burden public healthcare, overlooking the social and economic contributions of individuals with disabilities. Many people with disabilities are denied visas or deported, even after years of living in Australia.
- d. Migrants without other adaptation options may turn to labour migration, seeking employment in non-green sectors where they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, poor working conditions, and inadequate social protection.

5. Climate adaptation is still not systemically considered in other core industries or sectors

- a. Lack of consideration of climate adaptation in other vital industries, such as urban development and city planning, and private sector industries with large migrant worker recruitment- such as agriculture, manufacturing, and construction.

- b. Lack of understanding and knowledge by policymakers around the specific challenges and required solutions for communities affected by climate change.
- c. Green economy and green jobs programmes still do not focus enough on labour rights, nor do they consider the vulnerability of migrant workers.
- d. Continued lack of information, awareness and ethical data collection amongst local and national governments, the media, and the private sector around the impact of climate change on migration.

Opportunities

1. **Addressing and implementing rights-based, durable long-term cooperation frameworks and regular pathways for climate and labour presents an opportunity to promote policy and governance coherence.**
 - a. Explore effective regional cooperation frameworks that can adopt a holistic and human rights-based approach to common issues and links between climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic difficulties, conflict, security, and the need for rights-based migration.
 - b. Improve legal frameworks and pathways through participatory decision-making and community management, which will in turn improve public policy in general and help it become more adaptive, flexible, and able to respond to climate issues.
 - c. These cooperation frameworks and policies are needed for community-driven resettlement for climate-displaced communities, loss and damage mitigation and compensation, regular pathways for climate-impacted migrants, ensuring protection of rights and access to justice for migrant workers and communities, and creating economic opportunities and adaptive job markets.
 - d. Develop strong cooperation frameworks, which will be crucial to taking strong global action to address climate change and reduce its negative impacts.
 - e. Ensure that green jobs offer decent work and uphold human and labour rights, which is vital for both national and migrant workers. A rights-based approach is essential to guarantee fair wages, safe working conditions, and the right to freedom of association, ensuring all workers, regardless of nationality or (im)migration status, are protected.
2. **Promoting nuanced understanding and community-defined migration as adaptation solutions can ensure that all pathways are rights-based and responsive to the rights and needs of migrant workers, Indigenous Communities and other affected populations.**
 - a. Lean on the leadership, expertise, and good practices of climate-affected communities and States to improve climate resilience and effective climate adaptation.
 - b. Improve the efficacy of climate adaptation and impact understanding through the intersectional consideration and centring of impacted communities for climate justice.
 - c. Ensure the meaningful, rights-based participation of migrant workers and trade unions, which is critical to ensuring a just and effective green transition. Often in vulnerable positions, these workers must be integrated into training programs and job market analyses to equip them with the skills needed for emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. This requires robust social dialogue at national and international levels, where migrant workers and unions have their rights to freedom of association and inclusion protected, and thus have a platform to negotiate fair wages, job security, and working conditions.
 - i. Ensuring the freedom of association of migrant workers is essential. Their right to organise and actively participate in social dialogue on climate and green transition issues strengthens policies by making them inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the contributions and needs of all workers in the green economy.

- d. Promote and invest in community funds for adaptation and investing in Indigenous and affected-community leadership, which is critical to ensure effective and localised climate adaptation and resilience. This must include the right to stay and adapt in place.
3. **Opportunity to save lives and establish fair, human rights-based labour pathway programmes that will be sustainable for the green transition and future of work.**
 - a. This must include guarantees of protection for migrant workers, climate adaptation provisions for decent work standards and healthcare, and reforms to existing work programmes to centre labour rights and family unity.
 4. **Promoting accurate and constructive climate migration narratives can help combat xenophobia and push for action on climate change.**