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4D – Dialogues on Demographic Diversity and Dividend(s)

## Climate Resilience for Demographic Dividend(s)

### Introduction

The climate crisis is among one of the most significant challenges of our time, hampering sustainable development and the potential to make use of demographic dividend(s). Increasing extreme weather events such as heat waves, heavy rainfalls, hurricanes, droughts, and other natural disasters threaten the livelihoods and well-being of populations across the globe, leading for example to limited access to clean water, sanitation, health and education services or rising food insecurities – key areas for demographic change. Developing countries have limited resources to adequately serve the needs of their mostly fast-growing populations and are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change. Experts estimate that more than 100 million people could find themselves below the poverty line by 2030. Demographics also strongly influence the extent to which people are affected by the impacts of climate change. Vulnerable populations such as women, young people or migrants are particularly at risk as the climate crises exacerbates already existing inequalities.

When infrastructure, such as clinics, schools or highways are destroyed in the wake of climate-related disasters many children and youth are not able to finish their education, girls and women cannot access health care, including family planning and other sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services. That contributes to higher maternal and child mortality, gender inequalities as well as HIV infection rates. Due to Cyclone Eloise in Mozambique in January 2021 more than 20,000 women risked unwanted pregnancies because access to contraception was limited. According to the Malala Fund, an international non-profit organization advocating for education, climate-related events prevent four million girls in developing countries from finishing their education. This impedes sociodemographic change as limited access to those areas hinders people to lead a self-determined and healthy life with better income-opportunities. Climate change is also having a noticeable impact on population distribution as migration and displacement from rural to urban areas is more likely to occur in disaster-affected communities. In 2019 seventy percent of the 33 million newly displaced people migrated due to climate-related triggers.

To facilitate demographic transition, it is necessary to increase the ability of everyone – particularly of key populations such as women, youth, and migrants – to better cope with climate risks by investing in their health, education, and nutrition and thereby strengthen their resilience. If people have access to education and the skills for a prosperous life, as well as to services to improve SRHR, they usually decide to have smaller families. That ultimately leads to a decrease in fertility. At the same time, populations become less vulnerable to the effects of climate change if they understand what harms the environment they live in, how they can protect it, and sustainably adapt their behavior to cushion the effects of future climate threats. At the same time, policymakers must include populations in climate resilience and adaptation measures and strengthen understand the reciprocal relationship between population and environment.

The strong interlinkages between population, sustainable development and environment were already recognized by the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) back in 1994 and reinforced at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 in 2019. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement combatting climate change and its impacts as a major threat to the vision of people-centered sustainable development have become central. In line with that, countries formulated individual National Determined Contributions (NDC) to respond to climate-related challenges. Also, the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 'The Africa we want' identifies environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities as key for a prosperous Africa. Moreover, the AU has developed the climate change and resilient development strategy and action plan to guide, coordinate and support the continent's response to climate change up to 2032.

## Needs for Action

- **Improve data on vulnerable groups**

There is a lack of disaggregated data on the needs of vulnerable groups mostly affected by climate change. This limits a comprehensive understanding of their risks and predictive modeling by the state or international organizations to develop targeted climate policies or community-based interventions. It is therefore necessary to strengthen national statistical systems, to build the capacity of local institutions to improve data collection and conduct research and monitor systems to ensure that future climate policies address local needs.

- **Strengthen SRHR for climate resilience**

To reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to the effects of climate change, countries should invest in a healthy, educated, and empowered female population through access to SRHR information and services. SRHR advances gender equality and increases opportunities for socioeconomic and political participation. It strengthens girls' and women's capacity to take part in the development and implementation of climate-resilient solutions.

- **Empower youth as agents of change for climate resilience**

Countries should include youth and youth-led organizations in movements for climate action. Therefore, it is crucial to build knowledge, skills, and to engage them in dialogue, climate policy design and implementation and support them financially. This can help drive locally owned adaptation responses in their communities as a means to long-term resilience.

- **Foster responses for climate migrants and displaced people**

To support individuals pushed to leave their homes following climate disasters and communities hosting climate migrants, technical and financial assistance is needed. This includes building climate-resilient, migrant friendly cities, the provision of housing, health, including family planning and SRHR, and employment opportunities in climate migrants' new locations.

- **Support multisectoral partnerships for climate resilience**

Multisectoral approaches and partnerships play a key role in ensuring that climate adaptation programs for strengthened resilience of women and young people receive adequate investment. Especially those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change urgently require increased financial resources for adaptation measures to address the impacts of climate change on their communities and infrastructure. This demands greater collaboration between humanitarian, climate, health, and women's rights organizations.

## Best Practices

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to act on climate resilience and demography, and each country should decide for itself which approaches best meet its needs and demands. However, policymakers can learn from successful interventions elsewhere and adapt them to their context.

- ***Future Yetu* – Youth engagement on local climate adaptation in Kenya**

With *Future Yetu*, the Kenyan community-based organization *Hope Raisers Youth Initiative* engages residents of Nairobi's fourth biggest informal settlement Korogocho in climate adaptation efforts. By using digital storytelling, the youth-led project gives local community members a voice to share their own experiences around climate-related issues and the impacts on their daily lives. The stories are shared with a team of community members, urban planners, and government officials for consideration in local climate adaptation interventions. Between 2020 and 2021, the *Future Yetu* project engaged over 100 community residents to identify local climate change-related problems. The digital stories were shared with over 300 members of the local community and government officials. The results informed the creation of the Korogocho Climate Adaptation Manifesto, with concrete guidelines and recommendations for local climate action presented at the City of Nairobi to inform its climate adaptation plan. To build up relations with local government and further drive local action on climate-adaption, *Future Yetu* has also established the Korogocho Climate Change Adaptation Committee.

- ***Blue Ventures* – Protection of SRHR and aquaculture in Madagascar**

*Blue Ventures* is a UK-based science-led social enterprise that develops transformative approaches for locally owned marine conservation across the globe. It uses a holistic approach in Madagascar that recognizes the linkages between people, their health, and the environment by incorporating sexual and reproductive health and family planning services into sustainable coastal livelihood and resource management initiatives. Women in remote locations along Madagascar's coasts are trained as community health workers. They offer contraceptives to improve particularly girls' and women's limited access to basic healthcare services and take on responsibility concerning sustainable aquaculture resource management. Instead of damaging the coral reefs through overfishing, the women trained are now harvesting seaweed in a sustainable manner. The approach is supported by education strategies on essential livelihood activities to improve their food security and to increase

their economic autonomy. This enables them to lead self-determined lives, make choices about the number of children they wish to have to better provide for their families. Since *Blue Ventures* began in 2007, it is estimated that more than 4,500 unintended pregnancies have been averted and more than 45,000 people have been reached.

- **Urban management of internal migration due to climate change in Bangladesh**

The project implemented by the German Development Cooperation aims to improve the living conditions of climate migrants and other vulnerable urban poor living in 47 slums in the cities of Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi, Satkhira and Sirajganj which host the lion share of migrants in Bangladesh. It helps to develop the basic urban infrastructure of the cities as they do not have sufficient capacities and resources to keep up with pace of incoming people and offers vocational trainings for migrants to integrate them into the local economy. So far, over 20,000 slum households have received detailed information about public social services through the setup of centralized information hubs and with the help of tailored education campaigns. Customized vocational training courses have been launched to equip slum dwellers with the skills needed to find a decent job in the economy. During the first waves of the pandemic the project also informed households about measures to prevent Covid-19 infections.

- ***EpiNurse* – Project for improved disaster risk management in Nepal**

The Epidemiology Nurse (*EpiNurse*) projects by the Nursing Association of Nepal aims to prevent the outbreak of diseases after climate-related disasters by improving the quality of health data through modern information and communication technologies. To enhance public health emergency preparedness, nurses are trained to act as health security monitors and equipped with digital monitoring and surveillance tools that allow them to collect data on the living conditions of their communities. By surveilling public health, they are able to prevent and control eruptions of infectious diseases. The collected data is analyzed and compared nationwide with other health actors such as the Ministry of Health. *EpiNurse* has also been successfully implemented in Japan, Indonesia, and the Philippines.