



UNITED NATIONS

PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM 2016

19 September | UN Headquarters, New York

Protecting the Planet: Thematic Discussion Briefing Note

Discussion Objectives

In a 40-minute luncheon discussion at the Private Sector Forum, UN, Business, Government and Civil Society participants seated at tables of ten will address challenges and opportunities set out in this briefing, share examples of their own organizations' commitments to action, and identify new opportunities to collaborate with other participants to scale impact.

Discussion Question

How can Governments, the United Nations and the private sector work together to improve climate-resilience and address climate-induced migration?

Introduction

Climate change is one of the greatest threats of our time. Its consequences impose increasing stress on our planet, habitats and livelihoods. An average 22.5 million people have been displaced by climate or weather-related events since 2008.¹ This mass displacement is often caused by sudden natural disasters; however, an increasing number of people have begun to migrate due to the gradual deterioration of the environment. The recent adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement provide the international community with a framework to address environmental impacts and challenges across all sectors to reduce and prevent global shocks and create resilient, stable communities. Constructive dialogue and effective collaboration between Governments, the private sector and civil society have the power to turn this agenda into action.

Key Challenges

More frequent extreme weather events associated with climate change are expected to increase the number of displaced people in 2050 to an estimated 50 to 200 million.² These events will not affect all people equally; areas of high poverty and low access to essential services are often the most vulnerable. Children and families who are already disadvantaged are likely to face the most immediate dangers.³ Impacts such as desertification and sea level rise can make life unsustainable and, in particular areas, uninhabitable. For many people, adapting to these conditions means a conscious move to survive. Some, often the most vulnerable, are unable to move and become "trapped populations".

Climate and environmental impacts also affect business operations, their supply chains and the communities they serve. For example, the movement of populations and the effects of climate change on natural resources can threaten stability as an increasing number of people compete for a decreasing amount of resources. In addition, water scarcity, extreme weather events, compromised crops and livestock, and agricultural land degradation all contribute to disrupting food production, threatening food security and agricultural systems. Climate change impacts agricultural productivity and can significantly limit livelihoods, leading to growing rural poverty and challenging people's resilience.

Solutions

These challenges call for solutions at three levels. First, all members of society need to work together to enhance disaster preparedness, promote livelihood diversification and reverse environmental degradation. These steps will increase the ability of vulnerable communities to adjust to and reduce the need for people to flee. Second, migrant populations need to be assisted, protected and provided with durable solutions. Finally, migration as a climate adaptation strategy needs to be facilitated. Business can play an important role in advancing these solutions. For example companies should:

- Set climate adaptation goals and integrate them into existing risk management processes and core strategies.
- Implement practices that conserve water, increase vegetation cover, and restore soil and other natural resources.
- Develop and deploy new technologies for the sustainable management of resources and reduce the risk of disasters.
- Create new livelihood opportunities in areas hit hardest by climate change and where those affected may move.
- Invest in agriculture and rural people to sustainably address forced displacement.
- Provide children and youth with climate change education to increase their capacity to adapt, serve as environmental stewards and be agents of change.

¹ International Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Estimates 2015 Report.

² United Nations University Institute for Environment and the International Organization for Migration.

³ UNICEF, Unless We Act Now: The Impact of Climate Change on Children, 2015.



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- Engage in research partnerships to contribute to the knowledge base and new technologies for advancing climate change mitigation and adaptation, and building resilience.
- Partner in support of humanitarian efforts to assist migrants and contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening the self-reliance of displaced persons and the resilience of host communities.

UN-Business Partnerships and Initiatives

The **UN Business Action Hub** offers a central online entry point for companies looking to partner with the UN. Visit business.un.org or the new UN Global Compact [Partnership Passport](http://business.un.org/partnership-passport) to learn how to connect and partner. Companies are also encouraged to take action through the following UN-business initiatives:

Join Caring for Climate – the world's largest platform for business on climate change. Business leaders realize that climate change and environmental degradation pose important new risks and challenges for their companies' competitiveness, growth and development. Through innovation and long-term investments in energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies, business has the solutions to turn climate change into market opportunities. The UN Global Compact invites all business participants – learners and leaders with proven track record of commitment to climate action – to join Caring for Climate.

www.caringforclimate.org

Be a Corporate Adaptation Champion – a way for business to demonstrate leadership in anticipating and adapting to climate change, offering many benefits to the private sector. Companies can implement adaptation strategies in ways that both help meet their corporate goals and benefit the communities where they operate. The UN Global Compact is calling on business to promote resilience and adapt responsibly to climate change. Learn how to become an adaptation champion here:

www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/commit-to-responsible-corporate-adaptation

Join the CEO Water Mandate – an international movement of committed companies, both leaders and learners, committed to ensuring access to water and sanitation around the world. In this spirit, this UN Global Compact initiative welcomes companies of all sizes, sectors and regions, and at all stages of the water stewardship journey to learn and share the actions they are taking.

ceowatermandate.org

Apply the Food and Agriculture Business Principles – a voluntary framework developed by the UN Global Compact to advance the positive impact business can have in the food and agriculture space. They support companies in principle-based collaboration with the UN, Governments, civil society and other stakeholders. All businesses are invited to embrace the Principles and adopt responsible business practices to advance food security and sustainable agriculture.

www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/food

Join the Zero Hunger Challenge – a growing community working to end hunger, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. If your company has taken steps to align its strategies to the SDGs and to create more sustainable food systems, you can share the transformative change you are making and demonstrate leadership by joining the Zero Hunger Challenge. All businesses are invited to join.

www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/sdg2

Linking the SDGs and the Humanitarian Agenda

While all of the SDGs are interconnected and help advance the humanitarian agenda, the following SDGs are particularly critical to protecting the planet:

