



**Rabat Process**  
Euro-African Dialogue on  
Migration and Development

**Special Event:**  
***Climate induced mobility***

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Under the co-chairmanship of Nigeria and Switzerland

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## Overview

Co-chaired by **Nigeria and Switzerland**, the special event on climate-induced mobility explored how climate change is already influencing — and will increasingly shape — mobility dynamics across the Rabat Process region. The discussion sought to advance evidence-based policy and operational responses that strengthen community resilience, ensure protection and safe mobility pathways, and promote people-centred approaches, enabling States to move from reactive crisis management towards anticipatory responses to climate-related pressures.

Bringing together **100 representatives from 38 Dialogue partner countries**, as well as regional and international organisations, the meeting enabled in-depth discussions on the realities of climate risks and impacts across the Rabat Process region, challenges faced by affected countries and communities, as well as on shared needs and opportunities across the African and European regions.

The meeting aligned with the **Cádiz Action Plan**, which calls for increased efforts to prevent vulnerabilities linked to climate change and food insecurity (**Preamble**) and encourages integrating root causes of irregular migration — including climate change and forced displacement — into national development strategies and cooperation initiatives (**Objective 2, Action 5**). It also aligned with the **Joint Valletta Action Plan** which calls to address environmental and climate change issues in most affected regions, including through adaptation to climate change, the development of sustainable and renewable energies, the improvement of food security and the management of natural resources in a sustainable way.

### Specific objectives:

- improve understanding of how climate change is affecting human rights and contributing to mobility patterns across the 57 partner countries of the Rabat Process;
- highlight concrete examples of how communities experience climate change and respond to climate-related pressures;
- discuss policy and programmatic approaches that protect rights, support on-site resilience, and ensure safe mobility options; and
- strengthen collective reflection on legal and policy frameworks that can support people moving in the context of climate change.

## 1) Opening ceremony

The **Secretary to the Government of the Federation of the Republic of Nigeria, Senator George Akume**, honoured the event with his presence. He underlined that climate-induced mobility is a tangible reality in Nigeria and recalled that if mobility has historically formed part of communities' adaptation to environmental and economic change, the scale, frequency and intensity of recent climate pressures have significantly altered this dynamic. The Secretary to the Government stressed that mobility should not be viewed as inherently negative as, when supported by appropriate policies, legal protection and investment, it can constitute a legitimate adaptation strategy. He called for moving beyond reactive responses towards coordinated and people-centred approaches that reduce forced displacement while enabling safe and orderly movement where unavoidable. He highlighted the severity of recent climate shocks in Nigeria, recalling the 2022 floods which affected over 4.4 million people and displaced approximately 2.4 million across more than thirty states, with major impacts on housing, agriculture, food security and livelihoods. Recurrent flooding, environmental degradation in the Lake Chad Basin, coastal erosion and desertification were cited as key drivers undermining traditional livelihoods and contributing to displacement and mobility pressures, while also placing strain on host communities and local infrastructures. The Secretary to the Government presented national responses aimed at strengthening preparedness and resilience, including the [Global Flood Disaster Management Project to mitigate the effect of](#)

[climate change](#). He further referred to risk analysis, preparedness planning, early-warning systems, flood-resilient infrastructure, programmes supporting climate-resilient livelihoods and economic empowerment for displaced populations, as well as resettlement and recovery measures. Concluding, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation emphasised that the transnational nature of climate impacts requires strengthened international cooperation, shared responsibility and sustained solidarity, and reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to work with Rabat Process partners to advance coordinated responses to climate-induced mobility.

**Barr. Omotenioye Majekodunmi**, Director General of the National Council on Climate Change of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, stressed that climate change is a lived reality in Nigeria, visible through desertification in the north, rising sea levels along the coast and the shrinkage of Lake Chad. She noted that climate pressures are increasingly contributing to displacement and mobility undertaken out of necessity rather than by choice. She highlighted the nexus between climate action, peace and stability, emphasising that addressing climate stress can reduce drivers of conflict, support durable solutions for displaced populations and reduce distress movements. Restoration of degraded land and improved natural resource management were presented as contributing to reduced competition over land and water, strengthening livelihoods and enabling communities to remain in place in safety and dignity. She recalled the enactment of the [Climate Change Act](#) establishing a national legal framework for climate governance and making Nigeria one of the first countries in the region to codify climate commitments in law. Under this framework, Nigeria is strengthening anticipatory preparedness, risk analysis and coordinated responses, including updated national climate commitments, migration-related policies and initiatives supporting green economic opportunities. Concluding, the Director General underlined that mobility should take place safely, orderly and with full respect for dignity, and reaffirmed Nigeria's readiness to cooperate with Rabat Process partners to address the regional implications of climate-related mobility.

On behalf of Switzerland, **Cristina Probst Lopez** underlined that climate change acts as a factor exacerbating inequalities both within and between countries and interacts with other drivers of mixed migration movements. She emphasised that environmental and climate factors increasingly intersect with socio-economic pressures, as droughts, floods and land degradation make living conditions more difficult in certain regions and may lead affected populations to move temporarily or permanently. She highlighted that the link between climate change and human mobility requires anticipatory and coordinated responses combining climate adaptation, development, migration governance and humanitarian action. In this regard, she stressed the importance of dialogue platforms such as the Rabat Process, which support partnership-based approaches among countries of origin, transit and destination. She stressed that discussions held during the meeting will contribute to a better understanding of current trends and dynamics of climate-related mobility and of the best strategies to strengthen resilience and to move from reactive responses to anticipatory programming. She reaffirmed Switzerland's commitment to international cooperation and referred to its activities in West Africa in partnership with ECOWAS and at the continental level with the African Union to better understand climate-induced mobility and learn from the experiences of partner countries already impacted by climate stress. Concluding, she stressed that the way the international community addresses climate change and related mobility will have significant implications for future resilience, stability and human dignity.

On behalf of the European Union, **Ambassador Gautier Mignot** welcomed Nigeria's decision to conclude its commendable chairmanship of the Rabat Process with a focus on climate change and its impact on migration – which he described as one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. The EU stressed that integrating climate change considerations into migration discussions is essential to better anticipate future mobility trends and to reduce unplanned and forced displacement. It highlighted that disasters, climate change and environmental degradation are having a growing and measurable impact on human mobility worldwide, particularly on internal forced displacement and internal migration. Ambassador Gautier Mignot recalled that climate change remains a key priority for the European Union, which recognises its far-reaching social, economic and humanitarian implications and the need for collective action and strong partnerships to mitigate risks, strengthen resilience, and reduce adverse effects on affected populations. The European Union further underlined the importance of integrating climate considerations into migration governance frameworks to

support more resilient, preventive and evidence-based policy responses. To address displacement and human mobility caused by climate change, the EU has already launched a global action on enhancing prevention, risk reduction and response to disaster- and climate-related displacement worldwide, with a budget of EUR 8 million. Ambassador G. Mignot recalled that Nigeria is among the countries benefiting from this initiative which complements the EU's broader migration portfolio in Nigeria, amounting to approximately EUR 50 million and covering migration governance, reintegration, capacity building, legal migration and mobility. These commitments demonstrate the EU's continued dedication to a strong, comprehensive and forward-looking partnership with Nigeria, reaffirming its role as a long-standing and reliable partner.

On behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), **Commissioner Kalilou Sylla for Economic Affairs and Agriculture**, underlined that climate change is no longer a future risk in West Africa and the wider Rabat Process region but a reality already undermining food systems, income stability and access to decent work, weakening communities' ability to remain safely in place. The Commissioner stressed that mobility is increasingly used as a coping and adaptation strategy, but when movements are forced or unsupported, they expose people to protection risks related to irregular migration. The Commissioner highlighted that strengthening resilience in areas of origin remains a priority, requiring investment in climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable land and water management, livelihood diversification, skills development and resilient infrastructure. He recalled the adoption of the 2022 [ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy](#), which integrates human mobility into adaptation and resilience efforts. At the same time, for ECOWAS, on site adaptation has limits and mobility must, in certain contexts, be anticipated and supported as a complementary adaptation strategy. As such, he further underlined that investing in resilience helps reduce forced displacement, and that where movement becomes necessary it should be safe, dignified and rights-based, benefiting both communities of origin and destination. ECOWAS reaffirmed its commitment to continue the cooperation with Rabat Process partners to translate these principles into concrete policies and regional cooperation frameworks.

## 2) Session 1: Climate change and mobility trends across the Rabat Process

In the first panel, participants provided a regional overview of how climate change is reshaping mobility dynamics across the 57 partner countries of the Rabat Process. The discussion examined how slow-onset processes, including desertification, land degradation and sea-level rise, as well as sudden-onset events such as floods and storms, can drive internal and cross-border displacement, as well as primary and secondary movements.

Moderated by **Aurelia Donnard**, Head of the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) for West and North Africa, session 1 identified current and emerging climate-stress hotspots across Rabat Process partner countries; explored how environmental degradation interacts with socioeconomic pressures, pre-existing vulnerabilities and geopolitical instability; discussed how these combined stressors can affect human rights, increase conflict risks and undermine recovery in fragile and post-conflict contexts, while clarifying the scope of application of existing international human rights and asylum frameworks in responding to climate-induced displacement.

On behalf of the MMC, Aurélie Donnard recalled that climate-related human mobility takes multiple forms, notably internal mobility, international mobility, and immobility. She noted that some people move temporarily following sudden events such as floods or storms, others relocate within their country, and some cross borders in search of safety or livelihoods. Differing capacities to migrate — shaped by climate pressures interacting with socioeconomic conditions, existing vulnerabilities, and geopolitical dynamics — create a spectrum of situations ranging from voluntary movement to forced displacement and involuntary immobility. She emphasised that climate-related mobility is rarely a sudden occurrence but rather a gradual adaptation process. Mobility is often initially intended to be temporary, reflecting strong attachment to land and community, and internal or cross-border movements often occur as a last-resort decision once local coping strategies — including agricultural adjustments, livelihood diversification, and internal mobility — have been exhausted. In the meantime, mobility

rarely occurs by anticipation but often occur through reactive and risky pathways, including irregular routes, increasing exposure to violence, exploitation, and trafficking. She further highlighted that many people remain in place, sometimes by choice and sometimes due to limited resources. Those unable to move are often highly exposed to climate risks, environmental degradation, and the absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities. These dynamics are strongly gendered: environmental pressures frequently increase economic burdens on men while intensifying unpaid domestic and agricultural labour for women, who, along with other vulnerable groups, face heightened exposure to climate impacts and exclusion from adaptation measures. She concluded by stressing the importance of understanding who moves, who stays, why, and under what conditions to design protection mechanisms that respond to actual needs and risks, and underlined the need for robust, evidence-based analysis to inform policy responses.

On behalf of IOM's Global Data Institute, **Robert Beyer** set the operational context by presenting recent evidence on the links between climate impacts and mobility across Rabat Process partner countries. He reported that, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, more than 14 million climate-related internal displacements had been recorded over the past decade across the Rabat Process partner countries. Very importantly, comparable patterns are emerging across the two regions, including declining agricultural productivity and increased exposure to flooding, underscoring the importance of strengthened international and interregional cooperation for anticipation, mitigation and adaptation. He illustrated these shared risks through concrete examples affecting both European and African partners. In West Africa, global warming above 2°C is projected to reduce maize yields by 20–40 per cent, while in Europe losses could reach 10–25 per cent at 1.5–2°C warming. He further noted that flood hazards are expected to intensify, with current 1-in-100-year flood events in major African river basins potentially occurring every 40 years and, under a high-warming scenario, up to 10 million people in Europe projected to be exposed to a 100-year flood event by 2100. He emphasised that, although future projections clearly indicate the scale of physical climate impacts, the social consequences — including voluntary mobility, forced displacement and immobility— remain more difficult to predict, as they depend on the interaction between climatic stressors and economic, social, political conditions, policy decisions, as well as on both the access to and the effectiveness of in-situ adaptation responses. He recalled that adaptation planning will be decisive in shaping future mobility dynamics, highlighting measures such as irrigation systems and drought-resistant crops in rural areas, together with flood prevention and heat-protection measures in urban settings, as key to limiting the scale of climate-related displacement.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, **Professor Elisa Morgera**, stressed that climate change is no longer a future risk but a present driver of human mobility. Across regions, people are already being evacuated, fleeing anticipated harm, or relocating in the aftermath of disasters. Some are forced to settle in areas equally, or even more exposed to climate hazards, or in locations already hosting large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, making relocation unsustainable. She called for protection considerations to be systematically integrated into planning, response and recovery efforts, whether through in-situ adaptation or safe mobility pathways. Simultaneously, human mobility pathways, she underscored, must be fully incorporated into disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation frameworks and supported by adequate resources. The Special Rapporteur emphasised that responses to climate stress must respect human dignity and include the voices and participation of affected communities. Mobility should be voluntary, forced evictions must be avoided, and planned relocation considered only as a measure of last resort. When relocation becomes unavoidable, authorities should ensure meaningful and informed participation of both affected and host communities and strive, as far as possible, to maintain previous living standards. Preserving the right to stay, she noted, requires investment in resilient housing, safe evacuation infrastructure, and access to land for schools and essential services. To enable safe mobility, she called for expanded legal pathways for people affected by climate change, including visas and visa waivers, humanitarian corridors, family reunification, regularisation mechanisms and temporary protection arrangements, ensuring legal status and protection safeguards. She further highlighted the need for improved and comprehensive data collection to inform protection responses. Beyond tracking population movements and disaster patterns, States should assess impacts on ecosystems, water and food security, public health, labour conditions, socioeconomic stability and the right to a healthy environment across

terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Such information is essential to understanding mobility drivers, identifying risks and designing appropriate responses for those who remain, those who move voluntarily and those who are compelled to move. Finally, she underscored that sustainable responses must be developed with affected communities themselves. Recognising customary practices, family and community solidarity mechanisms, and community-led resilience initiatives can strengthen self-reliance and reduce vulnerability. Locally grounded solutions, addressing livelihoods, health and environmental pressures in an integrated manner, are key to ensuring that climate action protects people as well as the planet.

On behalf of UNHCR, **Michelle Yonetani** recalled UNHCR considers climate change as: 1) firstly, a root cause contributing to displacement both within and across borders, including in certain situations movements that fall within the refugee framework; 2) secondly, as an amplifier of vulnerability and protection needs for people already displaced for a wide range of reasons; 3) thirdly, an amplifier of barriers to safe, dignified and durable return or settlement elsewhere when the adverse and destabilising effects of climate change have been unaddressed. She emphasised that for the UNHCR, climate change is not a standalone concern; it functions as a systemic vulnerability and risk multiplier for a broad spectrum of human rights. She recalled that its impacts depend on specific contexts and their interaction with factors such as conflict, instability, weak governance and discrimination, which can weaken States' ability or willingness to protect affected communities and individuals which may heighten risks of persecution and human rights violations and give rise to international protection needs. She also recalled that most forcibly displaced people worldwide originate from or reside in low- and middle-income countries that are highly exposed to climate impacts. This situation can amplify vulnerabilities and protection needs, create tensions and humanitarian crises, increase the risk of secondary displacement, and contribute to protracted displacement lasting many years, sometimes across generations. Regarding the use of the term "climate refugees" in public discourse, UNHCR does not recognise this as a new or separate legal category. She recalled that the term has no basis in international law and risks oversimplifying complex realities. On the contrary, she recalled the existing legal framework and stressed that there are circumstances in which existing refugee and human rights instruments, properly interpreted, apply to people fleeing climate-affected situations where the criteria for protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention are met. She provided several illustrations of situations in which the refugee status determination criteria of the 1951 Geneva Convention may apply, notably: 1) for people fleeing conflict or violence caused or exacerbated by climate change or disasters where the State is unable or unwilling to provide protection, leaving individuals at risk of persecution; 2) Environmental defenders, activists and journalists that may be targeted and persecuted for protecting natural resources, denouncing environmental harm, or advocating for adequate climate responses - actions that may be perceived as political opinion; 3) Persons belonging to particularly vulnerable groups — including women and girls, older persons and persons with disabilities — whom may be disproportionately affected by climate impacts. Pre-existing vulnerabilities may compound exposure to gender-based violence, trafficking, child marriage and other serious harms; 4) Indigenous peoples, minority groups and other marginalised communities who may be denied access to resources, assistance or protection, or are excluded from disaster risk-reduction strategies and national adaptation plans following climate disasters. She also recalled that under Article I (2) of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, the term "refugee" applies to persons compelled to leave their place of habitual residence owing to events seriously disturbing public order in their country and that in certain circumstances, climate-related disasters or impacts may fall within this provision. All of these considerations are further detailed in the [UNHCR's Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters](#). Ms. Yonetani further referred to other regimes applicable when refugee status determination criteria are not met, notably 1) non-refoulement obligations under which it is prohibited to return persons who do not meet the refugee definition but would face a real risk of serious harm upon return, including threats to life or exposure to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, which may encompass some persons displaced in the context of climate change or disasters and 2) complementary protection under international and regional human rights law which allow States to provide temporary protection or humanitarian stay arrangements on compassionate grounds (e.g. in the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region, a free movement protocol is being promoted to facilitate movement in the context of climate impacts and disasters.). Concluding, she recalled that UNHCR promotes protection for people displaced across borders in the context of climate change and disasters through

[a “toolbox approach,” drawing on existing legal frameworks and practices to support States in using available instruments and mechanisms.](#) Initiatives such as the [Review of Literature, Legislation and Case Law to Support the Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees for the Protection of Persons Displaced Across Borders in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change](#) or [the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda](#) reflect this approach. Finally, she affirmed that as part of its mandate, [UNHCR will continue providing legal and policy guidance](#) to States, asylum authorities, courts and partners to ensure accurate determination of protection needs and a coordinated response that leaves no one unprotected.

**Professor Ian Fry** presented on the operationalisation of human rights standards in the context of climate-related mobility. He highlighted the growing scale of displacement linked to climate change, recalling IOM estimates that more than 218 million people have been internally displaced over the past decade due to weather-related disasters. He further noted that the [World Meteorological Organization’s 2024 State of the Global Climate Report](#) recorded the highest number of new disaster-related displacements since 2008, while underlining that reliable data remains limited for persons who cross international borders due to climate-related factors. He illustrated the cross-border dimension by citing evidence that, in 2020, approximately 75 per cent of new movements from Somalia to Kenya were linked to climate stress. At the global level, he recalled the [July 2025 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice](#), which affirmed that the adverse effects of climate change may significantly impair the enjoyment of human rights and explicitly acknowledged the situation of persons displaced across national borders due to climate stress. He emphasised that climate impacts may compel individuals to seek protection abroad or prevent their safe return, thereby engaging States’ obligations under the principle of non-refoulement. Drawing on his former mandate as Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change, he highlighted the heightened protection risks faced by people affected by climate impacts, particularly women and girls, including access to food, water, sanitation, housing, health and education as well as exposure to abuse, violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking and, in some cases, loss of life. He noted that, while some persons displaced across international borders due to climate change may fall within the protection grounds of the 1951 Refugee Convention, many others do not meet the Convention definition and therefore risk remaining without adequate protection. Recalling the International Court of Justice advisory opinion, he emphasised that individuals crossing borders in the context of climate change are entitled to protection under international human rights law but observed persistent gaps in implementation of the use of international human rights law in the context of climate change adaptation and legal mobility options. At the regional level, he referred to several political commitments aimed at addressing the adaptation and mobility challenges brought by climate change, such as the action plan of the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration action plan, the 2022 Cadiz Action Plan, the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change. He however stressed that despite these commitments, there is a need for tangible results around anticipatory action and strengthened legal protection. On anticipatory action, he emphasised the importance of strengthening climate resilience in countries most affected by climate impacts, noting that adaptation planning remains limited in many States vulnerable to Climate stress. Referring to [UNEP’s 2024 Adaptation Gap Report](#), he highlighted that several countries within the Rabat Process lack comprehensive adaptation strategies and that existing plans often do not sufficiently integrate human rights considerations. He also underscored challenges in accessing adaptation finance, observing that complex funding procedures favour countries with greater institutional capacity. He suggested that a dedicated technical support mechanism, potentially under the Rabat Process, could assist the most affected countries in developing and implementing targeted adaptation plans and help prioritise funding allocations from international climate finance mechanisms, such as the [Adaptation Fund](#) and the Green Climate Fund. Turning to legal protection and legal mobility pathways, he suggested developing a regional definition for persons displaced across national borders due to climate change and integrating it into regional instruments and cooperation frameworks. Possible avenues included amendments to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and to the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons. He further noted that Rabat Process partners could consider supporting a United Nations General Assembly resolution encouraging the development of an additional protocol to the Refugee Convention to address protection needs arising from climate-related cross-border displacement and to reinforce applicable human rights and humanitarian protection mechanisms. He concluded by emphasising the increasing scale of climate-related displacement and the need for timely and coordinated responses.

On behalf for the Carnegie Foundation for Peace Endowment, **Shana Tabak**, began by noting that habitability - where human beings can live - lies at the heart of climate impacts and its interaction with adaptation and mobility. Human activity is reshaping the climate, and in turn affecting the conditions that allow societies to live, work, thrive and ultimately survive. The key question, she suggested, is therefore twofold: how to build resilience in the places where people live, and, where this is no longer possible, how people can move safely, with dignity, and towards sustainable living conditions. She outlined four broad categories of movement in the context of climate-induced mobility: 1) migration, both within borders and across borders; 2) forced displacement, internally and across borders; 3) planned relocation, where communities are compelled to make organised relocation decisions because remaining is no longer viable; 4) immobility, affecting those who cannot leave or who are effectively forced to remain in place despite growing risks. She stressed the universal relevance of climate impacts: no one is immune to the adverse effects of climate change. However, the central distinction is one of climate justice. Climate change disproportionately affects populations that have contributed the least to greenhouse-gas emissions. Most climate-related movement occurs within national borders, meaning that States most affected by climate hazards retain responsibility for most of displaced persons, often despite having the least capacity to build resilience or adapt. By contrast, communities with greater financial resources have more opportunities to adapt successfully. Turning to data, she highlighted that policymakers frequently ask about projected cross-border movements and whether predictive models can accurately determine future flows. In her view, any apparent precision regarding numbers on climate mobility remains largely illusory. Available estimates vary widely. The [World Bank's Groundswell](#) report suggests that approximately 140 million people could be internally displaced by climate impacts. Other analyses refer to figures ranging from one to two billion people potentially affected globally. She explained that these larger estimates derive from research on the "[human climate niche](#)," developed by Wageningen University, which examines conditions — rainfall, temperature and flooding patterns — that have allowed human societies to thrive over the past 6,000 years. While this niche remained relatively stable for millennia, climate change is now reshaping it. By 2070, up to one-third of the world's population could live outside these historically favourable environmental conditions. This, she argued, provides a clear direction even in the absence of precise forecasts: either people will adapt and build resilience in increasingly transformed environments, or they will be compelled to move away from areas that fall outside this climate niche. Two priorities for policymakers, researchers and practitioners. First, to uphold the human rights and dignity of people already on the move due to climate impacts. Second, and equally important, to unlock funding so people can mitigate climate as a driver of displacement in the first place. She pointed to emerging opportunities, including engagement with international financial mechanisms, for example exploring how applications to the [Fund for Loss and Damage](#) can incorporate human mobility considerations. Ensuring that Global Majority countries can access these mechanisms is essential, as this would enable communities that wish to remain in place to strengthen resilience, and sustain livelihoods.

### Key takeaways from the panel discussion

- Climate change is already shaping mobility patterns within the Rabat Process region, with more than 14 million climate-related internal displacements recorded over the past decade across partner countries. Climate-related internal displacement continues to exceed internal displacement caused by conflict and violence globally.
- Addressing climate stress can help reduce drivers of conflict, support durable solutions for displaced populations and limit distress-driven movements. Measures such as restoration of degraded land, improved natural resource management, resilient infrastructure, climate-resilient livelihoods and economic empowerment can reduce competition over land and water resources, strengthen local resilience and enable communities to remain in safety and dignity despite climate stress.
- Strengthening risk analysis, preparedness planning and early-warning systems is essential as much as ensuring the meaningful participation of affected communities in adaptation, protection and

mobility planning. Their participation can enable policymakers to better understand both the capacity to remain and the capacity to move, as well as the vulnerabilities shaping these abilities (such as socio-economic inequalities and gender-related factors, thereby supporting more targeted in situ adaptation measures and mobility pathways.

- Access to adaptation finance remains a major challenge, as complex procedures often disadvantage the most affected communities, which frequently have limited institutional engagement capacity. Establishing a dedicated technical support mechanism for the preparation and submission of adaptation finance requests, and for the development of tailored and locally grounded adaptation plans, could help affected communities build resilient in situ coping strategies and support States financing these investments in reaching those most affected — who have often contributed least to climate change — thereby advancing climate justice.
- Climate-related mobility generally unfolds gradually as part of adaptation processes. Movement is often initially temporary and typically occurs only after local coping strategies - such as agricultural adaptation, livelihood diversification and internal mobility in nearby areas - have been exhausted.
- Climate change impacts can lead to different spectrum of situations, including: 1) migration (internal and cross-border), 2) forced displacement (internal and cross-border), 3) planned relocation where remaining is no longer viable, and 4) immobility affecting those unable to move for a variety of reasons including intersectional vulnerability.
- In certain circumstances, on-site adaptation can reach its limits. Where movement becomes necessary, mobility should be anticipated and supported as a complementary adaptation strategy. Policies should ensure that those who wish to remain can do so in safety and dignity, while those who need or choose to move can access safe and rights-based mobility options.
- The term “climate refugees” has no basis in international law. However, existing refugee protection frameworks may apply in certain climate-affected situations where the criteria of the 1951 Refugee Convention or the criteria of Regional Refugee instruments are met. Where these criteria are not fulfilled, States remain bound by non-refoulement obligations as a customary principle of international law and may wish to offer, on a discretionary basis, complementary protection under international and regional human rights law.
- Habitability shall serve as the guiding thread in policy design, informing both in situ adaptation measures and mobility pathways conducive to sustainable integration.

### 3) Session 2: Strengthening on site resilience and ensuring protection in climate mobility

Moderated by **Maxime Giraudet**, Councillor for the French Ministry for Europe and foreign affairs, this session explored policies and practices that can enable individuals and communities to remain safely in place through enhanced resilience, improved services, and diversified livelihood options. It also focused on measures that can reduce forced and reactive displacement and ensure that, when on-site resilience measures are insufficient, mobility can occur safely.

Maxime Giraudet first addressed the commonly drawn distinction between fast-onset disasters and slow-onset climate processes, questioning the temporality of policymaking and emergency responses. While both phenomena are linked to climate change, they respond to different dynamics, requiring different policy approaches. However, in practice, he emphasised that responses tend to be rapid in the case of fast-onset

disasters as they are highly visible and quickly trigger emergency funding and political attention. By contrast, slow-onset processes which progressively erode livelihoods, social cohesion and human rights, ultimately undermining people's capacity to remain in place, do not always lead to anticipatory action or prompt decisive policy action, precisely because large-scale forced displacement has not yet materialised. He therefore posed a central question: how can resilience and protection responses operate on the same temporality as climate risk itself and how can policies address slow-onset dynamics rather than reacting only once displacement has become unavoidable? He then addressed the relationship between in situ resilience and mobility, noting that policy discussions often appear to follow an implicit sequence — first prioritising resilience in place, followed by internal mobility, and only subsequently cross-border movement. In this context, in situ resilience may at times be interpreted primarily as a means of limiting mobility. He suggested that this understanding would benefit from further nuance, emphasising that the central policy objective should not be to prevent movement, but rather to reduce crisis-driven displacement and avoid the complete uprooting of vulnerable populations. Thirdly, he highlighted that climate risks, livelihoods and mobility patterns are highly place-specific, while protection frameworks, financing tools and migration governance mechanisms are largely designed at national or regional levels. He therefore called for better assessment of the needs of affected communities, as well as for national and regional frameworks to support locally grounded resilience and protection strategies.

For **Shana Tabak**, Director Climate Mobility at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, anticipatory approaches must pursue two complementary objectives: helping people stay where they wish to remain and helping people move safely when mobility becomes necessary or desirable. To achieve this, she underlined that policies in sectors such as agriculture, development and peacebuilding have significant implications for human mobility and must therefore be integrated in adaptation planning. Ensuring food security, for example, becomes critical when climate change disrupts agricultural production and access to food, as this directly affects whether communities can remain in place. Sea-level rise may gradually render certain areas uninhabitable, while resource scarcity can exacerbate tensions and contribute to conflict, potentially leading to forced displacement. Adaptation policy must be understood not as a single-sector response, but as a cross-cutting approach that has the power to shape mobility outcomes. She further stressed that people should be placed at the centre of climate action and that adequate financial resources must be unlocked for adaptation so that affected communities have the means to remain if they choose to do so. At the same time, she acknowledged that mobility can, in certain circumstances, itself constitute a successful form of adaptation, particularly when it is safe and well-managed. She pointed to examples of successful adaptation through mobility, noting that remittances sent by migrants can support families who remain behind and strengthen their capacity to adapt to climate change. She also highlighted demographic decline in some European regions, suggesting that labour migration pathways may form part of broader strategies that have the potential to respond to both demographic shifts and to climate adaptation. Concluding, she empathised that effective climate responses must therefore address both dimensions simultaneously: enabling people to remain in dignity where possible, while creating safe, legal and predictable pathways for mobility where necessary.

On behalf of the European Commission (DG INTPA), **Samuel Simon Pulido** presented the European Union (EU) approach to climate change and climate-related mobility and outlined operational support aimed at strengthening local resilience and climate adaptability. He recalled that climate change constitutes both a policy and programmatic priority for the European Union structured around three pillars: 1) First, addressing the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation. The EU supports national initiatives and strategies on disaster risk reduction, community resilience and climate adaptation, including in agricultural systems and water supply infrastructure, as well as the mainstreaming of climate considerations across other sectors such as health and social protection. 2) Second, providing assistance and protection to displaced populations and supporting safe and orderly mobility where movement constitutes a coping strategy. 3) Third, promoting global advocacy, action-oriented research, data collection and analysis, and the exchange of knowledge and good practices. He noted that multiple EU policy frameworks integrate climate mobility considerations. In this regard, he referred to the 2022 Commission Staff Working Document "[Addressing displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation](#)" as the main strategic document underpinning the European Commission's work.

He further recalled complementary policy instruments, including: the [2017 European Consensus on Development](#), committing EU Member States to address root causes of migration and forced displacement, including environmental degradation and climate change; the [2021 EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#) recognising climate mobility within adaptation efforts; the [European Green Deal](#), committing the EU to cooperate with partners to strengthen environmental resilience and prevent environmental pressures from contributing to conflict, food insecurity and displacement while supporting a just transition globally; the [2021 Communication on EU Humanitarian Action](#); and the [2024 EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), which also recognises climate change as a driver of displacement and irregular migration. Within the Global Refugee Forum pledge on climate action, he indicated that the EU committed to scaling up accessible finance for displaced communities, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. A pledge of EUR 303 million was announced, of which over EUR 212 million had been disbursed as of February 2025. He specified that disbursement is organised around five priorities: 1) risk-informed anticipatory action; 2) preparedness in fragile and conflict-affected contexts; 3) climate and environmental resilience; 4) urban preparedness; and 5) data and knowledge, notably in a number of African countries. In addition, M. Pulido presented several EU flagship programmes. At global level, the EU supports initiatives implemented by the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\) aimed at improving prevention, risk reduction and responses to disaster- and climate- related displacement](#), including strengthening governmental and regional capacities to monitor and report on displacement and integrate it into broader disaster risk reduction strategies. He also introduced the [ResilientRemit initiative](#), co-funded by the EU and implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which enhances the resilience of rural households by linking migrant remittances to savings, credit, insurance and financial services, thereby enabling adaptation to climate shocks. At regional level, he highlighted the [Regional Responses to Climate Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa \(RE2CLID\) programme](#), implemented by International Organisation on Migration in partnership with Enabel and the World Food Programme. The project strengthens the resilience of displacement-affected communities in areas vulnerable to climate impacts, particularly in the Lake Tanganyika region, through an integrated approach combining resilience, governance and inclusion, including sustainable natural resource management and participatory governance benefiting both displaced populations and host communities. He further noted EU support to regional climate mobility programmes in South and Southeast Asia. He recalled that for nearly two decades the EU has supported national, regional and multi-country programmes addressing climate mobility and promotes the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, including in conflict settings, with the aim of protecting persons in vulnerable situations and addressing drivers of irregular migration. Concluding, he emphasised that the EU would continue to pursue a multi-actor, multi-sectoral approach in this field.

On behalf of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), **Margaret Njuguna** recalled that the Centre, established in 1998 works globally and at country level to improve understanding of internal displacement and to support evidence-based responses. IDMC stressed that disaster and climate-related internal displacement continue to exceed internal displacement caused by conflict and violence globally. She presented the EU-funded project (2023–2027) [“Enhancing prevention, risk reduction and response to disaster and climate-related displacement worldwide”](#) which aims to strengthen knowledge of the drivers, patterns and impacts of internal displacement related to climate stress and to build the capacities of governments and regional organisations to monitor, prevent and address disaster-related displacement. She highlighted IDMC’s monitoring and analytical activities, including global data collection and reporting through the [Global Report on Internal Displacement](#) and related databases and regional publications. Research and assessments were noted to include socioeconomic impact studies conducted in Sierra Leone, Sudan and Nigeria, as well as the development of displacement risk profiles for several countries, including Kenya, Bangladesh, Guatemala and Nigeria. A new [Global Disaster Displacement Risk Model 2.0](#) will also help assess displacement risk based on hazard, exposure and vulnerability factors. She further outlined capacity-strengthening efforts, including data-ecosystem mapping, training and tailored technical support to partner countries, for example a data standardisation program with Nigeria. Dialogue initiatives were also mentioned as supporting improved coordination and commitments towards resilience. Upcoming activities include the dissemination of the recently published socioeconomic impact assessment in Nigeria, as well as the finalisation of a similar assessment in Bangladesh. IDMC also plans to publish and disseminate four national displacement risk profiles (Kenya, Bangladesh,

Guatemala and Nigeria), organise a regional workshop with IOM in the Caribbean on disaster displacement risk, and prepare the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2026, to be released in May. The Centre reaffirmed its commitment to continue supporting partners in strengthening prevention, preparedness and dignified responses to internal displacement.

On behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), **Alice Ochsenbein** presented Switzerland's engagement on climate-induced mobility within the Rabat Process region. Both climate change and migration constitute thematic priorities for the Swiss Agency, with a primary geographic focus on Africa and emphasis on gender considerations. She outlined the rationale for Switzerland's engagement and described the available evidence based on the research of SDC's partner, the Mixed Migration Center, in key border areas in the Sahel region, its policy implications and the programmatic response. The research conducted under the EMBRACE project through the Mixed Migration Centre provides operational insights into how climate impacts shape mobility patterns, risks and needs. Findings from the EMBRACE research in West Africa indicated that climate impacts already influence mobility dynamics. 81% of respondents reported being affected by climate conditions not only in their areas of origin but also along routes and at destination. Risks were described as accumulating across space and time and influencing decision-making well before departure and after arrival. Mobility was presented as frequently driven by necessity rather than free choice: for 91% of respondents, climate conditions made leaving necessary. Movement was described as incremental and adaptive, typically beginning with local coping strategies, followed by seasonal or circular mobility and only subsequently longer-distance movement. Most climate-related movement was reported to be internal or regional, frequently directed towards cities, border towns and trade hubs rather than towards Europe, thereby framing climate mobility primarily as a regional development, governance and stability issue. It was further observed that mobility and immobility often coexist within households. Those unable to move - often women or persons with fewer resources - may be more exposed to climate-related risks. These findings provide concrete insights on policy implications and programmatic response. For instance, information gaps on risks were reported to significantly increase vulnerability. While individuals may possess general information about destinations or routes, reliable information on climate risks, seasonal hazards and service availability remains limited, affecting the timing and safety of movement. Access to trusted information was hence described as a protection tool enabling anticipation rather than reaction, which remain particularly important as climate stress also affects migration routes and often push individuals towards informal and more dangerous pathways. For those able to move, settlement was often challenged by the fact that cities and border areas often absorb most climate-related mobility but already face pressure on housing, land and services and work opportunities. Preparedness and access to trusted early information were presented as essential to enable safer and less distress-driven movement or, where possible, adaptation in place. The need for differentiated policy responses away from the one size fit all approach are needed, as sudden displacement, gradual mobility and immobility create different needs but are often treated as a single phenomenon. Climate policy, migration policy, disaster risk reduction and urban planning are often developed separately by different institutions and timelines. As a result, early warning systems may not link to displacement planning, migration frameworks may not connect to climate adaptation, and local authorities may lack guidance. It was further emphasised that responses should therefore be regional, coordinated and people-centred, supporting stability and governance rather than reacting only once crises emerge. To deliver its programmatic actions, the Swiss Agency works through regional institutions — in particular the African Union Commission, ECOWAS and IGAD – these efforts are implemented through GIZ.

On behalf of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), **Lilian Seffer** presented the Global Programme on Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (2023–2027), which advises the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supports pilot measures with selected partners in West Africa, the Pacific and the Philippines. Building on the first project phase, the programme applies gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches and develops knowledge and strategic guidance on climate-related human mobility. It focuses on policy advice and capacity development for regional organisations and national governments, while addressing knowledge gaps and facilitating communication between governments, regional organisations, researchers and climate and migration actors. The programme works with partners including ECOWAS, the African Union Commission, the Commission on Population and

Development of the Philippines and the Climate Change Division of the Office of the Prime Minister of Fiji. At ECOWAS level, she highlighted ECOWAS policy developments, notably the Regional Climate Strategy (2022) and the ECOWAS Labour Migration Strategy (2025), which recognise mobility as both a development driver and an adaptation strategy. At the same time, she noted the fragmentation of sectoral policies and emphasised the need to mainstream climate-related mobility across relevant frameworks and improve coordination and implementation among Member States, which are progressing at different speeds. The programme supports ECOWAS in convening, coordinating and guiding stakeholders, strengthening expertise within lead coordinating directorates, in particular the Free Movement Directorate and the Directorate of Environment and Natural Resources. Activities include targeted training, agenda-setting, cross-directorate cooperation and practical tools such as climate risk profiles and strategic guidance. Over 85 ECOWAS staff have benefited from training on climate-induced mobility, and work is underway to develop a management guidance note to support the integration of climate mobility considerations into strategy implementation.

Nigeria's anticipatory action framework, presented on behalf of **Ms. Iniobong Abiola Awe**, is centred on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), coordinated by the Department of Climate Change of the Federal Ministry of Environment with support from the Green Climate Fund and UNEP. The NAP aligns with the [Cancun Adaptation Framework](#) and promotes a shift from reactive crisis response to forward-looking planning. Ms. Iniobong Abiola Awe recalled that Nigeria has undertaken a nationwide Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) to identify climate hotspots, exposure patterns and mobility risks and to strengthen anticipatory responses. Priority actions include regularly updating climate-risk mapping and integrating it into sectoral planning (agriculture, water, urban development and disaster risk management), linking early warning systems to social protection and emergency preparedness, and strengthening regional and cross-border information-sharing, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, including through data exchange and joint risk monitoring under ECOWAS and related regional mechanisms. She emphasised that effective adaptation requires communities to act not only as beneficiaries but also as co-designers of solutions and outlined that the most effective forms of support combine anticipation, preparedness and recovery while strengthening local capacity. These include shock-responsive social protection, such as adaptive cash transfers and climate risk insurance; community-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness measures, including contingency planning, emergency shelters and local response committees; access to climate finance and micro-credit for households, farmers and small enterprises; and inclusive participation ensuring that vulnerable groups benefit from resilience investments. Investments in climate-resilient agriculture (including drought-tolerant crops and climate-smart practices), water resource management (flood control, watershed protection and safe water access), resilient infrastructure, livelihood diversification and skills development—particularly for youth and women—and climate-linked social protection systems were highlighted as effective in sustaining livelihoods and reducing the likelihood of distress migration. Finally, she calls for anticipatory planning that incorporate climate-risk mapping, early warning systems and scenario analysis to guide timely relocation decisions, and strengthen coordination across climate, migration, development and local authorities through clear mandates and aligned legal frameworks.

### Key takeaways from the panel discussion

- Move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach by developing differentiated policy responses to both sudden-onset hazards — which may lead to forced and reactive displacement — and slow-onset climate pressures that may result in gradual mobility, while also addressing intersectional factors and vulnerabilities that may lead to forced immobility.
- Recognise adaptation policy as a central determinant of future mobility outcomes and as requiring a cross-cutting approach bridging climate policy, migration governance, disaster risk reduction, urban planning, water management and food security.

- Acknowledge that mobility often unfolds incrementally and adaptively, typically beginning with local coping strategies, followed by seasonal or circular mobility and only subsequently longer-distance movement. Adaptation planning should therefore address both dimensions simultaneously: enabling people to remain in dignity where possible while supporting safe, legal and predictable mobility pathways where necessary.
- Priority actions could include: (i) strengthening data collection and analysis; (ii) regularly updating climate-risk mapping; (iii) integrating climate risk mitigation measures into sectoral planning (agriculture, water management, urban development and disaster risk management); (iv) linking early warning systems to social protection, adaptation planning and emergency preparedness; and (v) strengthening regional and cross-border information-sharing on both climate risks and successful practices.
- Investments in climate-resilient agriculture (including drought-tolerant crops and climate-smart practices), water resource management (flood control, watershed protection and safe water access), resilient infrastructure, livelihood diversification and skills development - particularly for youth and women, resource-dependent communities or marginalised groups- are essential to sustain livelihoods and reduce the likelihood of distress migration.
- Promote equitable access to resilience investments, including by expanding access to adaptation finance and micro-credit for households, farmers, small enterprises, or vulnerable groups to strengthen resilience ahead of shocks and support recovery in their aftermath.
- Assess whether remittance-receiving households and communities are already investing in climate resilience and use the findings to orient public development funding towards areas where private resources are already supporting adaptation and may benefit from complementary forms of support.
- Address information gaps on climate risks, seasonal hazards and service availability, and expand access to trusted information as a protection tool enabling anticipation rather than reaction and reducing recourse to unsafe mobility pathways.
- Strengthen preparedness in cities, border towns and trade hubs receiving climate-related mobility, including housing, land management, access to services and employment opportunities.
- Reinforce regional and cross-border cooperation, including platforms for data exchange, joint risk monitoring and coordinated responses, particularly through ECOWAS and related regional and cross-regional mechanisms.

## Participation

The meeting attracted over 100 representatives from 23 African Dialogue partner countries and 15 European Partner countries, as well as regional and international organisations. Respondents to the online feedback form expressed a high level of satisfaction. All respondents indicated that the session enhanced their understanding of how climate change shapes mobility dynamics across the Rabat Process region, with 76% reporting this to a great extent and 24% to some extent.