

PREFACE

In 2015, the world rallied around a set of ground breaking agreements that together bring promise of a sustainable, more prosperous and inclusive global society: A society that also tackles climate change and shows solidarity with the poorest and most vulnerable, leaving no one behind.

Acting on climate change is a litmus test to our commitment to the Global Goals. We have, since the adoption of the Global Goals, seen the 2016 enactment of the Paris climate agreement, the 2016 ICAO agreement on aviation emissions, and the 2016 Kigali agreement on the HFC phase-out. These are all promising signs in our effort to halt climate change, but they are only the very first steps on a long journey to safeguard future generations, and they must be coupled with large-scale efforts to help those that are already seeing their livelihoods undermined by a changing climate.

Leaving no one behind in the face of growing climate change impacts stands out as another litmus test for our resolve to deliver on the deals that the world struck in 2015 - and it does so at the crossroad of climate adaptation and wider sustainable development challenges.

Across the globe, several hundreds of million people will face increased risks to their livelihoods due to the exacerbating effect that climate change can bring to other development challenges because of the changes in precipitation patterns and the volatility and frequency of storms. Most recently, hurricane Matthew demonstrated how hard vulnerable countries can be hit by leaving a trail of destruction, displacing tens of thousands of people, and placing more than a million people in need of urgent assistance in the island of Haiti.

The dire predictions described in this report should remind all of us of the critical need to act at speed and scale in building the resilience of the most impacted and vulnerable societies of the world.

The World Economic Forum has earlier pointed out, in its Global Risks Report 2016, the interconnected risks of failed climate adaptation and involuntary migration. The “Fleeing Climate Change” report further substantiates how successful and continued adaptation is key to avoiding the human cost of migration. The report also finds that the number of people displaced from their homes due to the amplifying effects of climate change is on a stark rise and will continue to do so for decades to come.

The challenge is dual: There is increasing evidence that climate change impacts exacerbate risks of not only migration, but also of wider unrest and conflicts unfolding in weak and poor regions of the world. We have seen climate change appear as a threat-multiplier in the pretext to the war in Syria due to the prolonged drought that preceded the conflict. And recent years have demonstrated that even rich countries can be severely challenged as recipients of large scale migration.

It is therefore in the interest of everybody that root causes of migration - including climate change - are addressed forcefully and intelligently, and that their interlinkages with wider social stability needs are recognized and acted upon accordingly.

It is my hope that the “Fleeing Climate Change” report will help provide a new momentum for the effort to tackle climate change and the root causes for climate-induced migration across the globe.

We need it, and it is urgent.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connie Hedegaard'.

Connie Hedegaard
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