

## Fact Sheet 7/2024 PLANNED RELOCATION

*Planned relocation is the movement of people in high-risk areas to safer and more viable locations, through strategic interventions employed by governments and other relevant institutions.*

### What is planned relocation?

Planned relocation is the movement of people in high-risk areas through strategic interventions employed by governments and other relevant institutions. It involves the movement of people from areas of high-risk and declining sustainability to safer, more viable locations. It aims to preempt the negative consequences of sudden displacement events triggered by disasters or environmental degradation. Planned relocation may be carried out at the individual, household and/or community levels.

Planned relocation is carried out ‘under the authority of the State, takes place within national borders, and is undertaken to protect people from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change, including the effects of climate change’.<sup>1</sup>

[Planned relocations have taken place](#) in several African states, including: Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup>

### Why is planned relocation a ‘measure of last resort’?

Planned relocation is often considered a ‘measure of last resort’, to be used only when other options of climate adaptation are insufficient and ineffective. This is mainly due to the complexities of the relocation process and the high-cost implications attached to it. In addition, knowledge gaps exist regarding the long-term efficacy of planned relocation strategies. Therefore, a comprehensive consolidation of past experiences is crucial to inform best practices and optimise future implementation.

In some contexts, however, planned relocations are a viable option, and may be the preferred option of particular communities. Planned relocation is also likely to become more common as the impacts of climate change increase over time.

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<sup>1</sup> See IOM, [Planned Relocation: Four Points to Consider in a Changing Environment](#)

<sup>2</sup> Erica Bower and Sanjula Weerasinghe, [Leaving place, Restoring Home: Enhancing the Evidence Base on Planned Relocation Cases in the Context of Hazards, Disasters, and Climate Change](#) Platform on Disaster Displacement (2021) 72.

## What are the laws and policies governing planned relocation?

There is no dedicated legal framework governing planned relocation at either the regional or international levels. A number of international frameworks relating to disasters, climate change and human mobility recognise planned relocation as an important mechanism in this context. Paragraph 14(f) of the [2010 Cancún Adaptation Framework](#) recognises planned relocation as a distinct form of climate mobility (alongside migration, evacuation and displacement). Paragraph 27(k) of the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) recognises planned relocation as a tool for achieving disaster risk reduction outcomes and calls on States to ‘formulate public policies, where applicable, aimed at addressing the issues of prevention or relocation, where possible, of human settlements in disaster risk-prone zones’. Objective 5 of the [Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) calls on governments to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration for “migrants compelled to leave their countries of origin due to slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation” including via planned relocation where in situations where in situ adaptation or return is not possible.

Within Africa, there are few references to planned relocation within regional or sub-regional law and policy and frameworks. A number of states refer to planned relocation within their national Disaster Risk Reduction policies and strategies and National Adaptation Plans.

Existing legal frameworks do not provide normative guidance on when or how planned relocation should take place, however. The development of effective planned relocation laws and policies hinges upon the establishment of a robust, shared understanding of the concept. This would ensure consistency and appropriateness in policy approaches, fostering collaborative actions, based on a unified set of principles.

[A Toolbox: Planning Relocations to Protect People from Disasters and Environmental Change](#), published by IOM, UNHCR and Georgetown University, advises that the way in which decisions are made and implemented in planned relocations ‘will depend on the particular national and local contexts, the available timeframe, and the underlying triggers’. However, there are five cross-cutting elements that should be considered in all planned relocations:

1. Establishing and complying with an appropriate legal framework;
2. Understanding and addressing the needs and impacts of Planned Relocations on affected populations;
3. Providing information to, undertaking consultation with, and ensuring the participation of, affected populations;
4. Understanding and addressing complexities related to land issues; and
5. Undertaking monitoring and evaluation, and ensuring accountability

### About Climate Mobility Africa Insights

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