

Assessing Climate Change Induced Displacements and Its Potential Impacts on Climate Refugees: How Can Surveyors Help with Adaptation?

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SUMMARY

Global warming and climate change pose severe threat to many countries, territories and cultural heritage of humanity on earth in the 21st century. One of the ensuing effects of climate change is the issue of climate induced displacements and the consequent migrant (climate refugees). Over the past two decades, the debate about “climate refugees” among experts, advocacy groups and social scientists has produced lots of different scenarios about environmentally induced migration. However, the term “environmental refugee” or “climate refugee” remains somewhat vague and has no international charter. Hence, a significant number of people who are climate refugees at the moment are not accorded the need support under the 1951 United Nations (UN) convention and 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees. This paper review literature and uses qualitative analysis to evaluate recent climate induced displacements, potential future scenarios (2050 as baseline), and international legal regime to assess global capacity to deal with the threat. In the past three years, long icy winter conditions at the polar and temperate regions have also caused significant displacements and migrations due to significant loss of livelihood. In addition, climate induced sea-level rise also threatens coastal settlements and low-lying small island states, particularly; those in the Pacific Ocean are vulnerable. It has been predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2007 that all these climatic conditions and their impacts are likely to intensify from now to 2050. These clearly highlight the need to build strong global capacity and strategies for managing the risk and impacts of climate induced displacements and climate refugees. Surveyors already have strong capacity and expertise in disaster risk management; therefore, they could be engaged in the planning and development of climate change adaptation strategies to accommodate the impacts of climate change, particularly, the issue of climate refugees.