

Side Event at the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Human Rights Implications of Displacement in the Context of Disasters

Speakers:

H.E. Ambassador Alexandre Fasel, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva

H.E. Ambassador Manuel Dengo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva

Professor François Crépeau, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants
Professor Jane McAdam, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Australia
Professor Walter Kaelin, Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative



Thursday, 20 March 2014
13:00 – 15:00
Palais des Nations - Room XXIII

Refreshments will be provided outside Room XXIII



UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP

**THE
NANSEN
INITIATIVE**

DISASTER-INDUCED CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

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Background

Every year millions of people are forcibly displaced by floods, windstorms, earthquakes, droughts and other natural hazards. Most are displaced within their own country; some cross international borders in search of protection and assistance. In the context of climate change, such movements are likely to significantly increase. National, regional and international responses to this challenge are insufficient and protection for affected people remains inadequate.

Policy-making efforts to respond to the protection needs of persons displaced in disaster contexts should be informed by human rights principles including equality, non-discrimination, access to information and involvement in decision-making processes to ensure that such policy takes account of and responds to the needs of the most vulnerable.

Launched in October 2012 by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, the Nansen Initiative is a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on the development of a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of disasters, including in the context of climate change. The Initiative does not seek to develop new legal standards, but rather to discuss and build consensus among states on the potential elements of a protection agenda, which may include standards of treatment. Its outcomes may be taken up at domestic, regional and global levels and lead to new laws, soft law instruments or binding agreements.

To be effective, such a protection agenda must be mindful of and sensitive to the human rights of displaced persons.

The international human rights system has undertaken considerable work in terms of strengthening human rights in the context of internal displacement. It has been spearheaded by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and guided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. But how relevant are these mechanisms and instruments in the context of cross-border disaster-induced displacement, how well do they work and how could they be adapted or improved? Have the protection gaps identified by states in the June 2009 Human Rights Council panel debate on human rights and climate change been addressed? How can the international human rights community best respond in order to complement and support efforts such as the Nansen Initiative? The side-event will consider these and other issues, and will also contribute to a study being undertaken by Professor Jane McAdam and the Universal Rights Group on the human rights implications of cross-border displacement in the context of disasters.



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Panel

Moderator

H.E. Ambassador Alexandre Fasel, Permanent Representative of Switzerland

Panelists

‘The impact of cross-border displacement on human rights: Update from the Nansen Initiative’s Regional Consultation in Central America, San José, Costa Rica 2-4 December 2014’, Ambassador Manuel Dengo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica.

‘Protection of the human rights of migrants in disaster settings’, Professor François Crépeau, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

‘The human rights implications of cross-border displacement: What are the protection gaps and what is the role of the Human Rights Council?’ Professor Jane McAdam, University of New South Wales, Australia

‘How can the work of the Nansen Initiative strengthen the protection of human rights in the context of cross-border displacement and disasters?’ Professor Walter Kaelin, Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Nansen Initiative

