

Key Findings

- Extreme environmental events, including those linked to climate change, have contributed to a rise in food insecurity, with the number of people worldwide experiencing acute food insecurity and in need of urgent assistance rising to over 257 million in 2022, a 146 per cent increase since 2016.
- Both sudden-onset disasters such as hurricanes and floods and slow-onset events such as droughts and rising sea levels contribute to food insecurity by destroying infrastructure and degrading livelihoods, in some cases prompting a decision to migrate.
- The links between climate change, food insecurity and human mobility are complex, with other factors such as conflict, social inequality, employment opportunities and state fragility influencing decisions to migrate. Climate hazards can also result in immobility, with families in extreme hardship lacking the resources to migrate.
- Migration can be an effective form of adaptation to climate change, and some people do relocate when food security is threatened. Governments have also run relocation programmes in anticipation of climate-linked displacement, with varying results depending on the level of input and agency of the people affected.
- Remittances sent by migrants can help families in their countries of origin adapt better to climate change and related food security issues, both by buying food and investing in adaptation measures. In some cases, households adapt to climate stressors by combining local-level adaptation measures with the migration of family members.
- There is a lack of reliable data relating to future numbers of climate migrants, and unreliable projections can trigger potential security concerns, despite little evidence that migrants pose security threats. This oversimplification of climate change mobility has the potential to spark xenophobia and undermine integration and social cohesion.
- In many cases climate-linked events and food insecurity prompt migration from rural to urban areas, but there are concerns that infrastructure in cities could be vulnerable to sudden-onset climate disasters, and already scarce resources could be put under further strain by the arrivals of large numbers of migrants.

- Successful interventions to address food security and support climate adaptation require deep and inclusive engagement with local communities. Ample evidence shows that there is much to learn from local and indigenous knowledge, not only to enact more inclusive policies, but also to be successful in sustainable ways.

Takeaway for Policy

Policy approaches towards climate change and food security and should not be aimed at preventing migration, but addressing adverse drivers so people are not forced to move while also enabling migration as a possible choice for achieving global development goals through safe, regular and orderly migration. Forward-looking policy responses should also be designed to acknowledge that human mobility is likely to increase due to environmental change and associated food and water crises, and to prepare future migrants and host communities to meet these challenges.



The full chapter is available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-7>.



The WMR interactive platform can be accessed at <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/>.

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