

Climate change maseru

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The impact of climate and environmental change as major drivers of migration has attracted both scientific and policy attention since the late 1980s (Piguet, 2013; Ionesco et al., 2017; Flavell et al., 2020). Whilst ongoing scientific debates have sought to clarify environmental change-related migration as often mediated by the associated complex multi-casual socio-cultural, economic and political factors (Piguet and Laczko, 2014; Cattaneo et al. 2019), it is also increasingly recognised that climate change will aggravate environmental degradation and natural hazards, and as such increase population movements in especially regions that are highly exposed and vulnerable to climate-related risks and shocks (Renaud et al. 2011; Hummel, 2012; Rigaud et al., 2018).

In the Southern African region, for example, the devastating impact of Cyclone Eline in 2000 resulted in the displacement of more than one million people (NRC, IDMC and UNHCR, 2015). More recently (in 2019), cyclones Idai and Kenneth respectively displaced 640,000 and 45,000 people in the region (IDMC, 2020). Taking into consideration the nature and spatial extent of future climate change impact and natural hazards, Rigaud et al. (2018) project that under a scenario of sustained carbon emissions and unequal levels of development, sub-Saharan Africa could record up to more than 85 million climate-related migrants by 2050.

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Lesotho is a small, landlocked country in Southern Africa that has a high risk to natural hazards including floods, drought, frost, strong winds, and heavy snowfall.

In response to an official request received from the Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho, a National Workshop on Climate Change and Disaster-related Statistics was held in Maseru, Lesotho 31 October to 2 November 2023. This workshop was organized by the UNDRR, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with the Bureau of Statistics and Disaster Management Authority of Lesotho.

The workshop highlighted that to ensure efficient policies and practices to reduce disaster risks, knowledge building and governance must be done in coordination for example through centralization of data. The workshop brought together 32 participants from the Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho Meteorological Services, Ministry of Natural Resources, Maseru City Council, Ministry of Agriculture, and other UN organizations. International requirements and frameworks related to environment and disaster-related statistics and policy were discussed and assessed against national experience.

"This workshop was an important first step to strengthen the collaboration and facilitate the exchange of ideas

between all the relevant government agencies and is going to improve our literacy and how we communicate these data to our stakeholders." - Malehloa Celina Molato, Director of Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho

Notably, the participation of a representative from Eswatini's National Disaster Management Authority on Eswatini's data collection experience further enriched the learning process given the similar contextual disposition of the two countries.

"The similar contexts of Lesotho and Eswatini has led to a more nuanced learning experience and this opportunity to learn from each other was invaluable. Through this workshop, I have identified several improvements through this learning to be implemented back in Eswatini that are contextual and evidence backed." - Bonkhe Mchobokazi, National Disaster Management Authority of Eswatini.

The workshop in Lesotho served as a catalyst for increased cooperation and collaboration between various governmental ministries, departments, and agencies. It led to the identification and establishment of collaboration structures, self-assessment tools approaches that can be taken forward in Lesotho's progress towards climate change and disaster-related statistics.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 sets out a global framework to limit global warming to well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C (degrees Celsius), compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this global temperature goal, countries aim to reduce growth of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and rapid reductions thereafter, based on the best available science, economic and social feasibility.

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