



Bonn, 23 July 2010

Hot Systems: New approach to tackle climate change induced migration

Novel way of thinking about climate change, resilience, vulnerability and uncertainty was published by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Bonn and supported by the Munich Re Foundation (MRF). The holistic approach allows a better analysis of interdependent factors which lead to environmental induced humanitarian crisis. It was conceptualized with IPCC lead author Thomas Downing and 25 PhD scholars.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that over 24 million people around the world have fled because of floods, famine and other environmental disasters. Hence, there is a strong need to better understand this phenomenon.

Research on migration related to climate change often focuses on “tipping points”. These are abrupt transitions, e.g. non-linear unexpected natural events like the sudden melting of huge glaciers. Another problem in the actual research methodology is the concentration on geographically centred “hot spots”. The view for the bigger picture easily gets lost. The hot system approach aims to integrate these different concepts. Further on, it helps to recognize the impact of multiple disturbances and enhances prevention on humanitarian crisis. It combines multi-driving factors: social vulnerabilities, exposure to hazards and climate change impacts, which might lead to e.g., migration, are complex fields.

This new concept was conceived by 25 PhD scholars from 13 countries around the world together with Thomas Downing, a lead author of the [Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change](#) (IPCC) Report. The group recommends reviewing existing and ongoing work on preparedness, uncertainty, social vulnerability and interventions as well as developing an interdisciplinary method.

The research was published in the UNU-EHS [SOURCE](#) publication series and is the outcome of the 4th [UNU-EHS/MRF Summer Academy](#) on Social Vulnerability.

UNU
Langer Eugen – UN Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn
Germany

Press Contact:
Dr. Alice Fišer
Tel.: + 49-228-815-0219
E-mail: fiser@vie.unu.edu

Background:

UNU-EHS is part of the United Nations University system, a major think-tank of the United Nations. The University comprises UNU headquarters in Tokyo, Japan and a worldwide network of more than a dozen Research and Training Centres. The mission of UNU-EHS is to advance human security through knowledge-based approaches to reducing vulnerability and environmental risks. The SOURCE (Studies Of the University: Research, Counsel, Education) publications series targets students, scholars and professional seeking in-depth background information on topics relevant to UNU-EHS.

MRF was set up in 2005 by one of the world's leading reinsurers. Its central objective is to serve people at risk according to the motto "From Knowledge to Action". In 2005, *MRF* entered into a partnership with UNU-EHS to support and initiate policy relevant research on social vulnerability.

The *UNU-EHS/MRF Summer Academy* combines academic research with practical exercises. Its goal is to develop a cutting-edge research and policy implementation agenda on social vulnerability, and to provide a platform for dialogue between scientists, established experts and UN representatives.

The 2009 Summer Academy was dedicated to the topic "Tipping points in Humanitarian Crisis". The outcomes are published in the Sources "Tipping Points in Humanitarian Crisis: From Hot Spots to Hot Systems".

This year's Summer Academy on "Protecting Environmental Migrants – Creating New Policy and Institutional Frameworks" explores legal aspects of environmentally induced migration. The findings of the Academy will endeavor to create policy frameworks which protect current and future climate related migrants, as only a few national and international standards has been adopted. The results will be presented in a new edition of the SOURCE publication series to be released in early summer 2011.

Further Information:

UNU Summer Academy 25-31 July 2010

Workshop Outline: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/5283>

Programme: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/5282>

Summer Academy Flyer: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/3441>

UNU-EHS, Bonn

Dr Xiaomeng Shen, Associate Academic Officer, UNU-EHS

Tel.: + 49-228-815-0258, E-mail: shen@ehs.unu.edu

<http://www.ehs.unu.edu/>

Source (No. 13/2010): Tipping Points in Humanitarian Crisis: From Hot Spots to Hot Systems: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/source-13-on-tipping-points-in-humanitarian-crisis>

Further Publications: www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/publications

Video News Release: How to guide for environment refugees
<http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/how-to-guide-for-environmental-refugees/>

Munich Re Foundation:

Christian Barthelt, Project Manager, Munich Re Foundation

Tel.: +49-89-3891-8888, E-mail: info@munichre-foundation.org,
www.munichre-foundation.org