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CLOSING REMARKS:[†] TOWARD A CLIMATE MIGRATION SOLUTION

Austin T. Fragomen, Jr. and Nancy H. Morowitz ^{††}

I. INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to address a subject of great urgency: human mobility and climate change. We will address immigration solutions and frameworks for those displaced by climate change. We meet just a few months after NASA declared July 2023 to be the hottest on record,¹ with South America, North America, North Africa, and the Antarctic Peninsula experiencing especially marked increases in temperature.² Extreme weather events are occurring with more frequency and severity all over the world.³ Desertification, permafrost thaw, sea-level rise, heating of the oceans, and coastline erosion, are increasing,⁴ with ever-greater impact on the physical and economic security of the world's population.⁵

Climate hazards and disasters create climate migrants—individuals who decide or are forced to migrate because of gradually worsening or suddenly unlivable conditions. The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugee (UNHCR) has said that an average of nearly twenty-two million people per year were displaced by sudden weather events

[†] These closing remarks were given at Case Western Reserve University's 2023 Cox International Law Center Conference on September 29, 2023.

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1. Claire A. O'Shea, *NASA Clocks July 2023 as Hottest Month on Record Ever Since 1880*, NASA (Aug. 14, 2023), <https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-clocks-july-2023-as-hottest-month-on-record-ever-since-1880/> [<https://perma.cc/KCZ3-94HZ>].
2. *Id.*
3. *Extreme Weather and Climate Change*, NASA, <https://climate.nasa.gov/extreme-weather/> [<https://perma.cc/KY4H-X3CT>].
4. *Consequences of Climate Change*, EUR. COMM'N, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/climate-change/consequences-climate-change_en [<https://perma.cc/25MK-KY22>].
5. *See id.*

between 2008 and 2016.⁶ Both sudden and slow-impact climate hazards are expected to displace tens of millions in the coming decades.⁷ A World Bank study estimates that as many as 216 million people could be displaced by climate change by 2050.⁸ In most quarters of the international community, there has been a great deal of discussion about climate-related displacement, and there is a basic consensus that time is of the essence to deal with the problem of climate change and the people whose lives may be upended by it.⁹ But there has been no truly comprehensive approach thus far. We will attempt to address some of the reasons that the development of climate migration solutions has lagged thus far and offer some reflections on what is needed to make better progress.

II. CURRENT FRAMEWORKS

Many are internally displaced within their own countries due to the adverse effects of climate change,¹⁰ while others may be forced to cross borders.¹¹ Some displacements are short-term,¹² while others are indefinite.¹³ For some, displacement may be permanent because they lack the resources to return to their places of origin after the effects of a climate emergency are mitigated;¹⁴ for others, permanent displacement comes when their homeland is rendered uninhabitable.¹⁵ We are also aware that throughout the long history of mankind on

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6. *Frequently Asked Questions on Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, U.N. HIGH COMM'R OF REFUGEES [UNHCR] (Nov. 6, 2016), <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/frequently-asked-questions-climate-change-and-disaster-displacement> [<https://perma.cc/A8V5-U9K3>].
 7. *See Disasters and Climate Change*, IDMC, <https://internal-displacement.org/disasters-and-climate-change> [<https://perma.cc/TC85-2UHW>].
 8. VIVIAN CLEMENT ET AL., *GROUNDSWELL PART 2: ACTING ON INTERNAL CLIMATE MIGRATION*, 80 (World Bank Grp., 2021).
 9. *See, e.g.*, Fiona Harvey, *Scientists Deliver 'Final Warning' on Climate Crisis: Act Now or It's Too Late*, THE GUARDIAN (Mar. 20, 2023, 9:00 AM), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/20/ipcc-climate-crisis-report-delivers-final-warning-on-15c> [<https://perma.cc/CQF7-J4YA>].
 10. U.N. High Commissioner of Refugees [UNHCR], *Climate Change, Displacement, and Human Rights*, 2 (Mar. 2022).
 11. *Id.*
 12. Renee Cho, *Climate Migration: An Impending Global Challenge*, COLUMB. CLIMATE SCH. (May 13, 2021), <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2021/05/13/climate-migration-an-impending-global-challenge/> [<https://perma.cc/8P23-XA6N>].
 13. *See id.*
 14. *See id.*
 15. *Id.*

earth, humans have relocated for a variety of reasons – including climate change¹⁶ – in search of greater opportunities in a new environment. The push factors motivating relocation are mixed, culminating in the decision to migrate.¹⁷

The current global migration framework offers limited options for climate migrants. The United Nations Protocol on the Status of Refugees, established in 1951¹⁸ and broadened in 1967,¹⁹ is the foundational document establishing the rights of refugees and defining who is protected by its terms. Because the Protocol long predates the current threat of global warming, displacement due to climate change or disaster alone does not qualify persons for its protections,²⁰ though the UNHCR has recognized that climate change may be a factor in eligibility for refugee status, as where climate change and climate disasters lead to or exacerbate conflict or persecution.²¹

More recent global migration frameworks have recognized that climate change is a significant factor driving migration. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), a nonbinding agreement setting forth a common and cooperative approach to migration, addresses natural disasters, environmental degradation, and climate change as contemporary drivers of migration.²² The document takes the important step of beginning to define climate migration and its challenges through a call to action to create specific frameworks of protections for and commitments to populations displaced by climate change.²³ A number of other migration frameworks have also recognized climate change and its impact on migration, including the United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development,²⁴ the Paris Agreement under the auspices of the United Nations

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16. See Francesco Castelli, *Drivers of Migration: Why do People Move?*, J. TRAVEL MED., May 2018, at 1, 2.
 17. See generally *id.*
 18. U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137.
 19. U.N. Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, 606 U.N.T.S. 267.
 20. Joanna Apap & Sammi James Harju, Eur. Parliamentary Resch. Serv., *Briefing on The Concept of 'Climate Refugee' Towards a Possible Definition*, at 1, PE 698.753 (Oct. 2023).
 21. U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], *Legal Considerations Regarding Claims for International Protection Made in the Context of the Adverse Effects of Climate Change and Disasters*, 4, 6 (Oct. 1, 2020).
 22. See generally A/RES/72/244, *Agreement on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (July 13, 2018) [hereinafter GCM].
 23. See *id.* at 5–6.
 24. See G.A. Res. 70/1, at 2, 5, 23 (Sept. 25, 2015).

Framework Convention on Climate Change,²⁵ and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,²⁶ but have not yet reached full implementation.

Individual countries have created options for those fleeing natural disasters. The United States,²⁷ Switzerland,²⁸ Italy,²⁹ and some South American countries³⁰ offer Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to vulnerable populations, including those affected by climate change. Under the U.S. TPS program, nationals of sixteen countries, including a number affected by natural disasters, can access work permissions and temporary immigration status.

But the benefits of the program are restricted to individuals already in the United States, for whom repatriation would be dangerous due to home-country conditions. It does not offer benefits to those outside the United States.³¹ Argentina has created a generous humanitarian visa that can be accessed by climate migrants,³² though it has reportedly been little used thus far.³³ Some nations afflicted by extremes of climate

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25. See Treaty on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, *opened for signature* Nov. 4, 2016, 3156 U.N.T.S. 79.
 26. G.A. Res. 69/283, ¶ 4 (June 3, 2015).
 27. *Temporary Protected Status*, U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGR. SERV., <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status> [<https://perma.cc/6D5V-VWGZ>] [hereinafter USCIS].
 28. *Platform on Disaster Displacement*, SWITZ. CONFEDERATION, <https://eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/human-rights/migration/nansen-initiative.html> [<https://perma.cc/VWT9-2KDX>].
 29. U.N. Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner, *Climate Change: Protecting the Rights of Migrants*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/2PMigrationLight.pdf>.
 30. Valentina Canepa & Daniela Gutierrez Escobedo, *Can Regional Refugee Definitions Help Protect People Displaced by Climate Change in Latin America?*, REFUGEES INT'L (Feb. 16, 2021), <https://refugeesinternational.org/can-regional-refugee-definitions-help-protect-people-displaced-by-climate-change-in-latin-america/> [<https://perma.cc/9HJ5-79PA>].
 31. USCIS, *supra* note 27.
 32. Samuel Huckstep & Thomas Ginn, *A Look Back at Climate Migration Policy in 2022*, CENTER FOR GLOB. DEV. (Jan. 19, 2023), <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/look-back-climate-migration-policy-2022> [<https://perma.cc/T27N-9ZA7>].
 33. Daniel Salazar, *Climate-Related Displacement: Potential Protections in U.S. Policy*, RELIEFWEB (July 11, 2023), <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-related-displacement-potential-protections-us-policy> [<https://perma.cc/92HS-SV4Q>].

change—including Bangladesh,³⁴ Fiji,³⁵ and Vanuatu³⁶—have undertaken permanent relocation programs to move their most vulnerable citizens internally to areas of greater safety.³⁷ Regional solutions are also being devised, such as the Asia-Pacific Framework on Climate Mobility, which addresses mobility solutions for Pacific Island countries.³⁸ But single-country and even regional solutions are not enough to succeed against the magnitude of the long-term threat. That is why global organizations must make greater progress in developing wide-ranging, longer-term solutions and working to incorporate migration as an essential part of solutions to the adverse effects of climate change. These efforts look not only at migration as a function of disaster relief, but place migration policy at the center of efforts to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Long-term solutions are, by necessity, multifaceted. To adequately protect climate migrants, a comprehensive program must include not only admitting climate migrants, but ensuring that they will have housing, health care, work authorization to enable them to make a living, permission to reenter the host country after visits to their home country, and the ability to reunite their families in the host country.

III. THE SEARCH FOR LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

In 2018, the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) established several climate-related objectives.³⁹ These include developing and enhancing existing immigration pathways to be used while returning to a home country is not possible, such as humanitarian visa programs,⁴⁰

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34. Martin Raiser, *Key Highlights: Country Climate and Development Report for Bangladesh*, THE WORLD BANK (Oct. 31, 2022), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/10/31/key-highlights-country-climate-and-development-report-for-bangladesh> [https://perma.cc/3449-8STW].
 35. *Fiji*, CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE PORTAL, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/fiji/vulnerability> [https://perma.cc/T85W-LSQ4].
 36. *Vanuatu*, CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE PORTAL, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/vanuatu/vulnerability> [https://perma.cc/8LAN-GRG6].
 37. VANUATU NAT'L DISASTER MGMT. OFFICE, REPUBLIC OF VANUATU, NATIONAL POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT 12–13 (2018).
 38. *High-Level Dialogue on the New Regional Framework on Climate Mobility Concludes*, INT'L LAB. ORG. (June 24, 2022), https://www.ilo.org/suva/public-information/WCMS_850454/lang-en/index.htm [https://perma.cc/3Z4Z-FQ7J]; see generally Pacific Framework on Climate Mobility (2022) <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Annex-C-Pacific-Regional-Framework-on-Climate-Mobility-1.pdf>.
 39. GCM, *supra* note 22, at 5–6.
 40. *Id.* at 12.

private immigration sponsorships (like those established by the United States for the sponsorship of Ukrainians),⁴¹ and temporary work permit programs.⁴² The GCM has also established the objective of creating solutions for slow-onset adverse climate change, which entails anticipating climate impacts and working toward planned relocation of those affected.⁴³ The U.N. Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum⁴⁴ of June 2022 recognized sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters as drivers of migration, and declared that migration is a key facet in the reduction of disaster risks and resilience to disasters, climate change, and environmental disasters.⁴⁵ The Declaration recognized that regional and bilateral compacts have gone some way toward creating pathways for climate migrants, but urged policymakers to focus on the availability and flexibility of regular migration pathways.⁴⁶

The complex work of creating a solution begins with arriving at a deeper understanding of the problem. As many in the global community have recognized, there is a dearth of accurate and detailed data needed to understand the scope of climate migration.⁴⁷ Better studies are needed on the scale, duration, and severity of adverse climate effects and their impact on mobility.⁴⁸ Greater understanding is needed on the duration of displacements,⁴⁹ the needs of the displaced,⁵⁰ the costs of climate mobility,⁵¹ and projections of mobility patterns with respect to climate change.⁵² Most importantly, data on cross-border displacements is lacking.⁵³ As our colleagues in the Global Forum for Migration and Development have commented, current models to predict future

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41. *Id.*; see, e.g., *Ukrainian Sponsorship*, CWS, <https://cwsglobal.org/take-action/community-sponsorship-older/ukrainian-sponsorship/> [<https://perma.cc/DM7P-G8BB>].
 42. GCM, *supra* note 22, at 12.
 43. *Id.* at 9.
 44. G.A. Res. 76/266 (June 14, 2022).
 45. *See id.* ¶¶ 12, 74.
 46. *Id.* ¶ 24.
 47. Sebastian Schutte et al., *Climate Conditions are Weak Predictors of Asylum Migration*, 12 NATURE COMM'NS 2, 6–8 (2021).
 48. *Environmental Migration*, MIGRATION DATA PORTAL, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental_migration_and_statistics#further-reading [<https://perma.cc/RXM9-899J>] (Sept. 18, 2023).
 49. *Id.*
 50. *Id.*
 51. *See id.*
 52. *See id.*
 53. *Id.*

mobility are not deep or sophisticated enough to support the search for effective solutions.⁵⁴

Better data is also needed to address one of the most debated issues with respect to climate migration: who is a climate migrant. Because migration is typically prompted by a multiplicity of factors and motivations⁵⁵—some of which migrants themselves may not be fully aware of—defining who is a climate migrant entitled to protections is one of the most subtle and vexing problems we face. For instance, a labor migrant in search of better opportunities may be unwittingly responding to climate change, though climate may not be his or her stated reason for migrating.⁵⁶ Should he or she be classified as a climate migrant entitled to protections? Natural disasters may necessitate temporary migration, but depending on the circumstances, affected persons may be able to return to their homes at some point. What benefits and frameworks are best for this population? For those who are permanently displaced by environmental degradation, different solutions and benefits are needed, especially where entire communities are displaced.

IV. LABOR MIGRATION IS ESSENTIAL TO CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE AND MITIGATION

There are an estimated 169 million labor migrants in largely well-established employment-based immigration systems worldwide.⁵⁷ Increasingly, labor migration pathways are being viewed as valuable mechanisms for displaced persons.⁵⁸ In recent years, humanitarian groups have partnered with the business community to achieve dual purposes: offering legal migration pathways to refugees based on their

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54. GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, *THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN MOBILITY: PREVENTATIVE ACTION, HUMANITARIAN ACTION, AND DEVELOPMENT* 5–6 (2023).
55. *Exploring Migration Causes: Why People Migrate*, EUR. PARLIAMENT, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate> [https://perma.cc/4FXR-HK8C] (Feb. 5, 2023, 12:28).
56. *See Labour Mobility as Adaptation to Climate Change*, ESSENTIALS OF MIGRATION MGMT. 2.0, <https://emm.iom.int/handbooks/labour-migration/labour-mobility-adaptation-climate-change> [https://perma.cc/73KY-VJKW].
57. NATALIA POPOVA, INT'L LAB. ORG., *ILO GLOBAL ESTIMATES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS: RESULTS AND METHODOLOGY* 11 (2021).
58. *See Labour Mobility as a Pathway for Displaced Populations*, ESSENTIALS OF MIGRATION MGMT. 2.0, <https://emm.iom.int/handbooks/labour-migration/labour-mobility-pathway-displaced-populations> [https://perma.cc/MPL4-TU5R].

skills and abilities,⁵⁹ and filling skills gaps in receiving countries.⁶⁰ The same pathways should be explored for climate migrants. The labor migration system provides an established structure that can be developed over time as climate migrant needs evolve.

The first priority is creating realistic legal pathways either for an individual applicant or a group of persons, including permanent or conditional residency or short-term status. I previously outlined key elements of the immigration package.⁶¹ This would further include the ability to change from temporary protected status to long-term residency status where the ability to return has been rendered impossible based on climate change.

The primary focus is on employment in the new host location.⁶² Ideally, where the need to relocate takes place over a period of time, advanced planning is possible—including finding a suitable employment situation for the migrant.⁶³ Livelihood has historically been a major consideration in migration and is a well-recognized push factor particularly where traditional jobs are eliminated through climate change.⁶⁴ If skills were fungible, this would be an easier process. Matching skills or competencies with jobs would be the goal. An interim solution would be to assess employment conditions based on labor market needs in potential destination countries. There are acute skills gaps across the spectrum of countries experiencing labor shortages.⁶⁵ Frequently these skills gaps are reflected by thousands of job openings in occupations across the skills spectrum, commonly occurring in both selected high-skill and low-skill occupations.⁶⁶ The basic idea would be to anticipate or respond to skill needs in the domestic labor market while identifying client migrants with corresponding skill competencies.

59. *See id.*

60. *See* INT'L LAB. ORG., HOW TO FACILITATE THE RECOGNITION OF SKILLS OF MIGRANT WORKERS 4 (2 ed. 2020).

61. *See supra* Section Current Frameworks.

62. Dep't. of Econ. and Soc. Affairs, Int'l Migration Pol'y: Gov't. Views and Priorities, at 29, U.N. Doc. ST/ESA/SER.A/342 (2013).

63. *See Employment Pathways*, U.N. HIGH COMM'R FOR REFUGEES [UNHCR], <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/complementary-pathways-admission-third-1> [<https://perma.cc/AH7U-TA9L>].

64. *See* Int'l Org. of Migration [IOM], *Migration and Climate Change*, at 17-19, 41 (2008).

65. *See* Catalina Russu, *What is the "Global Skills Gap" And How Can an End be Put to It? Experts' Opinions*, DEV. AID (May 8, 2023), <https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/161302/global-skills-gap-experts-opinions> [<https://perma.cc/36NC-GR8S>].

66. European Commission Press Release IP/23/3704, Commission Report Finds Labor and Skills Shortages Persist and Looks at Possible Ways to Tackle Them (Jul. 6, 2023).

Appreciating the mismatch between individuals' competencies and occupational shortages, reskilling and training would be a major challenge to prepare the migrants for employment in a new country. We would expect that a disproportionate number of climate migrants would come from equatorial countries. Reskilling could take place in the country of origin, possibly subsidized by the potential private enterprise employer or the host country. Reskilling for job placement will frequently be occurring simultaneously for the domestic workforce displaced by climate change in that country. In fact, forty percent of G20 countries recognize skilling as part of climate change transition plans.⁶⁷

Moreover, there will be an increased need for labor in the burgeoning green economy. Reskilling climate migrants would be an additional source of labor. Another fertile area of job growth would be jobs newly created because of global warming.⁶⁸ Already, many jobs have been created in the northern tier of the world, and this is just the beginning of the exploitation of a fertile and mineral-rich vast area.⁶⁹ Infrastructure jobs are also beginning to multiply as countries launch extensive and expensive plans to mitigate the impact of global warming,⁷⁰ including beach replenishment,⁷¹ climate-resilient construction and retaining walls,⁷² and clearing of dense underbrush.⁷³

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67. Int'l Org. of Emp. [IOE], *No Just Transition Without Skills: Skills for Climate Change Policies*, at 11 (Mar. 2023).
 68. See Int'l Lab. Org. [ILO], *Greening with Jobs: World Employment Social Outlook*, at 1, 4 (2018).
 69. See *Doe Report Finds Clean Energy Jobs Grew in Every State in 2022*, DEP'T OF ENERGY (June 28, 2023), <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-report-finds-clean-energy-jobs-grew-every-state-2022> [<https://perma.cc/GEH2-ZMCN>].
 70. See, e.g., *Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Celebrates Historic Progress in Rebuilding America Ahead of Two-Year Anniversary of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Nov. 9, 2023), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/09/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-celebrates-historic-progress-in-rebuilding-america-ahead-of-two-year-anniversary-of-bipartisan-infrastructure-law/> [<https://perma.cc/45R8-V3ZP>].
 71. See *Beach Restoration and Coastal Protection to Revive Tourism and Fishing in Saly*, THE WORLD BANK (June 1, 2023), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/06/01/beach-restoration-and-coastal-protection-to-revive-tourism-and-fishing-in-saly> [<https://perma.cc/HEU9-U4DP>].
 72. See Int'l Coal. for Sustainable Infrastructure [ICSI], *The Climate Resilient Infrastructure Report: A Focus on Implementation*, at 7, 39 (Mar. 2023).
 73. See Jan Peterson, *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding clears path to restoring healthy habitat, reducing threat of wildfires*, U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERV. (May 26, 2023), <https://www.fws.gov/story/2023-05/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-helps-fight-fire-and-restore-rare-habitat-willamette> [<https://perma.cc/C5U9-XRM7>].

The OECD has emphasized the contribution of migrants in destination countries to the green transition and climate change adoption.⁷⁴ We must all recognize that almost every industry and economic sector will be affected by the altered environment, including tourism, hospitality, travel infrastructure, and consumer goods.⁷⁵ Finally, demography will assist in supporting labor migration as countries with low fertility rates experience increased labor shortages and skills gaps, and the countries with the highest fertility rates will see a greater impact of climate change with fewer resources for mitigation. In these countries, training and educating youth for livelihoods in a new land will be in the interest of the global community.

Matching job opportunities with skill competencies has been successfully tested on a pilot basis in refugee resettlement in Canada.⁷⁶ Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) together with the Canadian government agreed on migration pathways for ten occupations and standardized professional qualifications.⁷⁷ Although this is a small-scale effort at this stage, the TBB effort recognizes that relocation needs will be continual over time for many migrants.⁷⁸ Similarly, a project of vast dimensions outlined here would have to develop slowly, with employers taking the lead to recruit for their workforce from this rich pool of talent. Additionally, corporations would expand the creation of skills partnerships with governments, universities, and vocational training programs to equip migrants with the skills, competencies, and qualifications for employment. If we can establish a legitimate and valid source of talent, this could be a successful recruitment tool.

Meanwhile, the sophistication of job and skills matching grows through technology. The focus now is on establishing standards for

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74. See generally Org. for Econ. Coop. and Dev. [OECD], *What Role for Migration and Migrants in the Green Transition of OECD Countries* (Nov. 2023).
75. See generally Adel Ben Youssef & Adelina Zeqiri, *Hospitality Industry 4.0 and Climate Change*, 2 CIRCULAR ECON. & SUSTAINABILITY 1043 (Jan. 23, 2022).
76. Migration Pol’y Inst. Eur., *Why Matching Matters: Improving Outcomes in Refugee Sponsorship and Complementary Pathways*, at 5–6 (Oct. 2023), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpie-sponsor-matching-2023_final.pdf; *Government-Assisted Refugees Program*, GOV’T OF CAN., <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/government-assisted-refugee-program.html> [<https://perma.cc/NQ2P-FTRZ>].
77. Jessie Mawson, *Canada Launches New Migration Streams for Skilled Refugees*, TALENT BEYOND BOUNDARIES (Jun. 15, 2023), <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/blog/canada-launches-new-immigration-streams-for-skilled-refugees> [<https://perma.cc/S6MR-HUAM>].
78. See *Our Mission and Vision*, TALENT BEYOND BOUNDARIES, <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/mission-vision> [<https://perma.cc/HKH7-DBAC>].

measuring competencies for specific occupations.⁷⁹ This will include occupations where licensure is typically required, for instance in the medical profession.⁸⁰ Ideally, the goal is to harmonize requirements for occupations, including certification and licensure, and at the same time have agreed-upon measures of competency. Great progress has been made with academic credentials and equivalencies,⁸¹ but more work is needed.

V. REMITTANCES & DIASPORAS

An essential byproduct of employment of migrants in the host country is the ability to send remittances to relatives abroad. Remittances totaled \$794 billion in 2022.⁸² We are all familiar with the importance of remittances in the developing countries – constituting a major contribution to the gross domestic product of many nations. In countries such as El Salvador,⁸³ Haiti,⁸⁴ and Honduras,⁸⁵ remittances account for twenty to twenty-five percent of GDP.

This financial funding will supplement any government support in contributing to building climate resiliency in the home country, for instance, smarter agricultural practices and reforestation. The funding would be contributing to sustainable energy, water, and the purchase or installation of solar panels. Basically, remittances would support rural economies.⁸⁶ In addition, this funding could support a change in

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79. INT'L LAB. ORG., *supra* note 60, at 6.
80. *Id.* at 28–29, 46, 58.
81. Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *What a Waste: Ensure Migrants and Refugees' Qualifications and Prior Learning are Recognized*, at 3, 15, ED/GEM/MRT/2018/PP/37 (Dec. 2018).
82. Douglas Broom, *Migrant Workers Sent Home Almost \$800 Billion in 2022. Which Countries are the Biggest Recipients?*, WORLD ECON. F. (Feb. 2, 2023), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/02/remittances-money-world-bank/> [<https://perma.cc/XC7S-MYCV>].
83. Hannes Warnecke-Berger, *Remittances, the Rescaling of Social Conflicts, and the Stasis of Elite Rule in El Salvador*, 47 LATIN AM. PERSPS. 202, 203 (2020).
84. *Haiti Stands to Benefit from Integrating Migration Further into Sectoral and National Development Strategies, Says New Joint OECD Development Centre—INURED Report*, ORG. FOR ECON. DEV. (Aug. 8, 2017), <https://web-archiv.oecd.org/2017-08-09/447250-haitistandsto-benefitfromintegratingmigrationfurtherintosectoralandnationaldevelopmentstrategiessaysnewjointoecddevelopmentcentreinuredreport.htm> [<https://perma.cc/B7N2-JJYX>].
85. Gina Kawas, *In Honduras, Ximara Castro's Government is Caught in the "Remittances Trap"*, AMS. Q. (Jul. 3, 2023), <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/in-honduras-xiomara-castros-government-is-caught-in-the-remittances-trap/> [<https://perma.cc/PDQ8-9LNP>].
86. *Remittances Matter: 8 Facts You Don't Know About the Money Migrants Send Back Home*, U.N. DEP'T OF ECON. & SOC. AFFAIRS (June 17, 2019),

livelihood, such as conversion from fishing to agricultural work or relocation and a new career in an urban area.⁸⁷

The diaspora community providing the funding is also an important source of knowledge of more advanced products in the global market and climate abatement reconstruction efforts.⁸⁸ The creation or expansion of digital platforms is another enhancement frequently contributed by members of the diaspora community.⁸⁹

Aside from playing an important role in designing and leading projects, the advocacy role of the diaspora community in the host country or countries can influence public opinion and government policies in the host country – and through the media globally.⁹⁰ Finally, through pooling remittances or creating investment vehicles, actual investment can be made in the host country's climate adaptable projects.

VI. THE ROLE AND NEEDS OF CITIES

Specific mention of the role of cities in accommodating a growing population created by climate change-induced mobility is important. There will be a significant movement of migrants fleeing from inhospitable rural environments to cities as a result of climate change.⁹¹

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/remittances-matter.html> [<https://perma.cc/GDF6-8ZCA>].

87. See Lorenzo Cotula & Camilla Toumin, *Till to Tiller: Linkages Between International Remittances and Access to Land in West Africa* (Livelihood Support Programme, Food and Agric. Org. of the U.N., Working Paper 14, 2004); see also U.N. Migration Agency: "Remittance Flows Can Be an Economic and Social Lifeline for Migrant Families", INT'L ORG. FOR MIGRATION [IOM], (June 12, 2018), <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-remittance-flows-can-be-economic-and-social-lifeline-migrant-families> [<https://perma.cc/TM74-JHXL>].
88. See MIGRATION POLICY INST., DIASPORAS: NEW PARTNERS IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT 96 (Kathleen Newland ed., 2010); see also Nnamdi Ifeanyi Maduekwe & Francis A. Adesina, *Can Remittances Contribute to Financing Climate Actions in Developing Countries? Evidence From Analyses of Households' Climate Hazard Exposures and Adaptation Actors in SE Nigeria*, 27 MITIGATION & ADAPTATION STRATEGIES GLOB. CHANGE 3 (2022).
89. See Ghislain Bahati, *Forging New lives: Congolese Refugees as Digital Creators*, OXFORD DEP'T OF INT'L DEV. (Mar. 22, 2023), <https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/blog/forging-new-lives-congolese-refugees-digital-creators> [<https://perma.cc/F5GK-BE5F>].
90. Janna Cisterino, *Engaging the Diaspora: Prospects and Pitfalls*, 2011 PROC. GREAT DAY 179, 184–85 (2012).
91. Tegan Blaine et al., *Climate Change, Migration, and Risk of Conflict in Growing Urban Centers*, U.S. INST. OF PEACE (June 27, 2022), <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/climate-change-migration-and-risk-conflict-growing-urban-centers> [<https://perma.cc/DXU7-6MDX>].

Cities historically have provided livelihoods for people on the move who are seeking better opportunities.⁹² U.N. Habitat projects that human insecurity will increase urbanization dramatically by 2050.⁹³

Cities provide refuge and potentially higher earning power.⁹⁴ The informal economy⁹⁵ is vibrant, and the personal network for migrants is well-honed.⁹⁶ Much of this migration to cities will be internal within a country, but a significant portion will be cross-border.⁹⁷

The whole of society must work together to make the investment in infrastructure to reduce the vulnerability of these migrants. Cities must foster adaptation and migration strategies by building capacities – from housing to assistance in obtaining legal employment, from health care to job training – assuring wellbeing and livelihoods.

Within the environment of the city, the great challenge will be to meaningfully engage the youth. Maintaining a viable family structure is essential to assuring a positive result in developing a successful integration of young migrants into the new host location.⁹⁸ Substantial planning and the expansion of capacities are essential.⁹⁹ This cohort of young migrants will provide a wide source of talent for employers. The private sector has a strong stake in assuring a successful outcome.¹⁰⁰

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92. *Cities on the Frontline of the Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees*, GLOB. COMPACT ON REFUGEES (June 20, 2022), <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/news-stories/cities-frontline-implementation-global-compact-refugees> [<https://perma.cc/KVS7-66BX>].
 93. U.N. Habitat, *Envisaging the Future of Cities*, at 14, HS/004/22E (2022).
 94. *Cities on the Frontline of the Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees*, *supra* note 92.
 95. *What is the Informal Economy?*, INT'L MONETARY FUND [IMF] (Dec. 2020), <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2020/12/what-is-the-informal-economy-basics> [<https://perma.cc/J9S5-TBJH>].
 96. U.N. Habitat, *Local Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees: A Gateway to Existing Ideas, Resources, and Capacities for Cities Around the World*, at 10, 12, 27 (2020).
 97. *See The Future of Migration*, OFFICE OF THE DIR. OF NAT'L INTEL. (Mar. 2021), <https://dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home/gt2040-deeper-looks/future-of-migration> [<https://perma.cc/2JW8-CGNY>].
 98. Zorana Medaric et. al., *What About Family? The Role and Meaning of Family in the Integration of Migrant Children: Evidence From Slovenian Schools*, 7 FRONTIERS EDU.; LANGUAGE, CULTURE, & DIVERSITY 1, 2 (2022).
 99. *See* LUTHERAN IMMIGR. & REFUGEE SERV., HOLISTIC, ADAPTABLE, & COLLABORATIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION STRATEGIES 6 (2015); *Refugee Children and Youth*, U.N. HIGH COMM'R FOR REFUGEES [UNHCR], <https://unhcr.org/handbooks/ih/age-gender-diversity/refugee-children-and-youth> [<https://perma.cc/94XU-58GM>].
 100. Frances Froy & Lucy Pyne, *Ensuring Labor Market Success for Ethnic Minority and Immigrant Youth* 4 (OECD Local Econ. and Employment Dev., Working Paper 2011/09, 2011).

Urban environments ideally should provide better work, health care, education, reduced level of poverty, and social network.¹⁰¹ Substantially, fertility rates are lower,¹⁰² dependency on weather is de-emphasized,¹⁰³ and climate hazards are reduced.¹⁰⁴ Finally, legal pathways are critical to enable migrants forced to move by climate change to have work authorization, identity documents in the host country, and entitlement to basic social benefits.¹⁰⁵

VII. CONCLUSION

Developing a framework for migration and climate change is a massive undertaking. An effective solution must incorporate the relocation, training, and skilling of the displaced so that they can take advantage of new opportunities, whether in response to slow-onset or sudden-onset change. The displaced can also be the source of solutions to the adverse effect of climate change through the application of their skills and labor. An effective solution must also prepare the host countries to incorporate migrant populations, especially in their cities. We can look to the current situation in New York City as an example of what occurs when cities are unprepared for a sudden influx.¹⁰⁶

Migration policy changes are imperative in the face of demographic change.¹⁰⁷ Climate change adds new urgency to that imperative. In developed economies, demography will make skill gaps more common,

101. *See generally* U.N. HABITAT, *supra* note 96.

102. *See* George Martine et al., *Urbanization and Fertility Decline: Cashing in on Structural Change* 5 (Int'l Inst. for Env't and Dev., Working Paper, Dec. 2013).

103. *See* Bryce Oates, *Rural's Connection to Environment Means Bigger Climate-Change Impact*, DAILY WONDER (Jan. 7, 2019), <https://dailyyonder.com/rurals-reliance-on-outdoors-means-bigger-climate-change-impact/2019/01/07/> [<https://perma.cc/5Y99-6MUD>].

104. *See* Patrick Boyle, *Rural Americans Find Little Escape from Climate Change*, ASS'N OF AMERICAN MED. COLL. (July 13, 2023), <https://www.aamc.org/news/rural-americans-find-little-escape-climate-change> [<https://perma.cc/72JU-X37P>].

105. *See* MARA A. MAHMUD, CTR. FOR MIGRATION STUDIES, CLIMATE MIGRATION & THE FUTURE OF IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES 5 (2022); *see also* U.N. Network on Migration, Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability 2, 6 (2024).

106. *See* Will Freeman, *Why New York Is Experiencing a Migrant Crisis*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS (Oct. 5, 2023, 1:25 PM), <https://cfr.org/article/why-new-york-experiencing-migrant-crisis> [<https://perma.cc/Z6JR-2YF9>].

107. *See generally* GLOB. F. ON MIGRATION & DEV., TOWARD A GLOBAL COMPACT ON MIGRATION: PERSPECTIVES ON LABOR MIGRATION FROM THE GFMB BUSINESS MECHANISM (2017).

as populations age and decrease.¹⁰⁸ But the regions where climate change is most severe are also the regions with growing populations.¹⁰⁹ Skills mobility partnerships can help fill talent gaps in developed nations, while helping to cultivate new generations of talent who can return to their countries to work on solutions to climate change.

We must begin that focused work now. It will take decades of successful interventions to reverse the effect of global warming.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, we need to work together to develop a governance system, a binding global agreement, and funding to answer the challenge of human mobility.

108. *Id.*

109. See *Population and Climate Change: What are the Links?*, POPULATION CONNECTION, <https://populationconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-Population-Climate-Change-Info-Brief-final.pdf>.

110. See Brad Plumer, *Climate Change is Speeding Toward Catastrophe. The Next Decade Is Crucial, U.N. Panel Says*, N.Y. TIMES, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/20/climate/global-warming-ipcc-earth.html> [<https://perma.cc/RC3R-5QZN>] (Sept. 3, 2023).

