

Cross-border and internal environmental migration in South Africa – deciphering the complexities of the changing policy landscape

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Introduction

- Issues of **migration** from **other countries into South Africa** and **internal** migration (often rural to urban)
- How is **environmental migration** being addressed by **South Africa's policy and legislative framework?**
- **Implications** of far reaching recent **changes** in policy landscape.

Definition of environmental migrants

IOM's working definition of environmental migrants:

“**Persons** or groups of persons who, **predominantly** for reasons of **sudden or progressive changes** in the environment that **adversely affect** their **lives or living conditions**, are obliged to **leave their habitual homes**, or choose to do so, either **temporarily or permanently**, and who move either within **their country or abroad**”

Migration into and within South Africa

- Mixed and irregular **migrant flows into South Africa** – environmental factors can contribute
- Migrants entering South Africa – primarily use asylum seeker system
- **Internal migration** often overlooked
- Trend is from **rural to urban** - one of reasons is environmental pressures

Refugees and migration policy

- Key points

- Tighter and more restrictive public policy position on asylum seekers
- Refugees Act (1998); Refugees Amendment Act (2017); White Paper on International Migration (2017)

- Implications for managing cross-border migrants

- Who will house asylum seekers who have nobody to take care of them? Questions regarding proposed asylum processing centres
- Migrants can only work in formal sector

Disaster management policy

- Key points

- Disaster response activities aim to reduce impacts of a disaster
- Disaster Management Act (2014); Disaster Management Amendment Act (2015); National Disaster Management Framework (2005)

- Implications for managing environmental migration

- SA policy on disaster management primarily deals with rapid onset disasters
- Challenge of actualising effective local government and transboundary involvement in disaster management

Climate change policy

- Key points

- Climate policy framework - vision for effective climate change response
- National Climate Change Response White Paper (2011); Draft National Adaptation Strategy (2016).

- Implications for managing environmental migration

- Recognising climate change as a reality that needs to be understood and managed rather than prevented and ignored
- Local government implementation remains a challenge

Development and planning policy

- Key points

- South Africa's planning policy and legislative framework at national, provincial and local levels of government
- Spatial Land Use Management Act (2013); Provincial Growth and Development Strategy; Municipal Systems Act (2000)

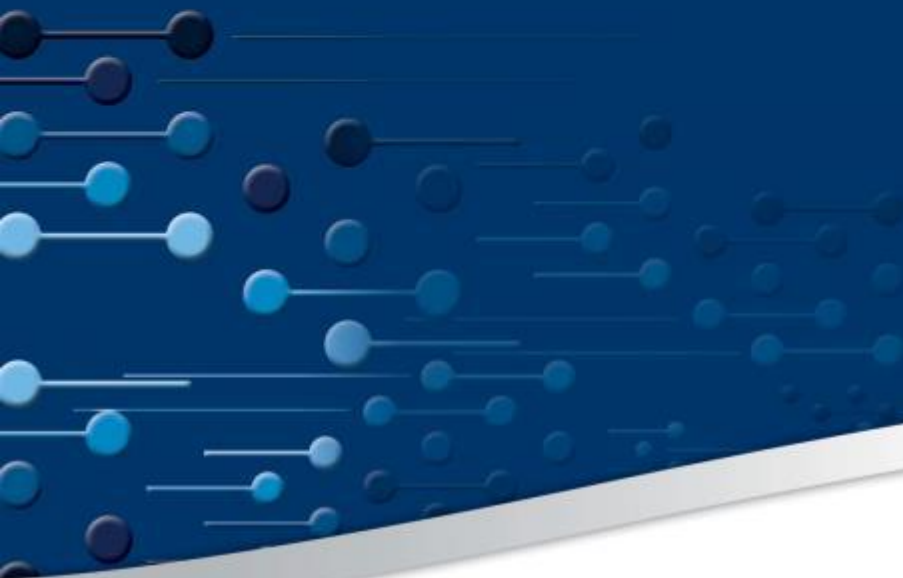
- Implications for managing environmental migration

- No mention of environmental migration/migrants

Conclusions and way forward

- Need for
 - a balanced discourse on MECC issues between different stakeholders
 - local government capacitation in terms of disaster management, climate change adaptation, rapid urbanisation
 - mainstreaming of environmental migration into relevant components of national policy framework
 - a national policy on environmental migration

Thank you



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