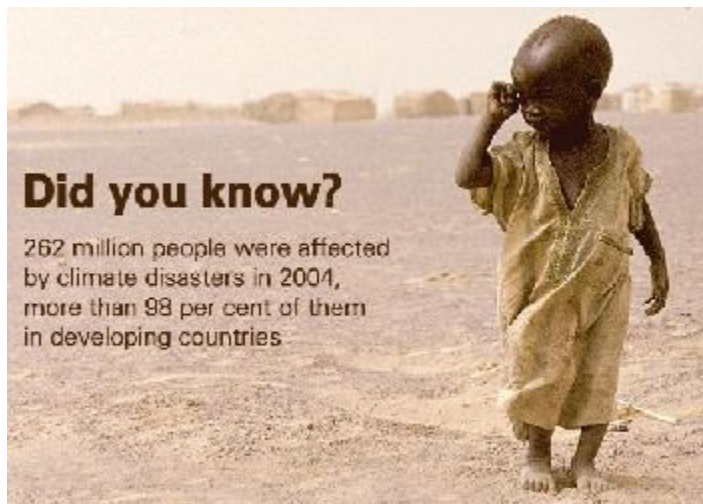


# *Question of Climate Refugees*

## **Internal and Cross- border Migrations in East Africa:**

Climate change is now acknowledged as a major threat to livelihoods, due to its predicted and observed adverse impact on food production and water availability. The issue of 'climate refugees' is growing at national, regional and international levels; it is yet to be explored in the East African region. The challenges that are associated with migration that



stems from environmental change are on the increase and require the attention of East African law makers. Climate change can affect the movement of people in four different ways: First, through rising sea levels which cause flooding; secondly, through higher surface temperatures which cause waterborne diseases that thrive in warmer waters such as cholera and vector borne diseases such as malaria; thirdly, through

disruption of the hydrological cycle which causes a difference in rainfall patterns hence droughts and or floods; lastly, severe weather conditions such as typhoons, cyclones, tsunamis, droughts, famines and El-Niños force people out of their habitats hence failed agriculture and long term food insecurity. Severe weather conditions account for the biggest percentage of factors that cause migration.



Migrations in East Africa usually occur due to droughts, famines, flooding and armed conflicts. There is an increase in the number of environmental refugees in this region and the world over. There have been numerous cases of climate refugees in Asia; Asia has been adversely affected by global warming. Currently, there are 15 million climate refugees and 10 million are under the mandate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). In 2010,

extreme weather conditions- floods- forced Somali nationals into Kenya; this shows an increase in climate refugees in the East Africa region.

Climate change has a direct impact on food security, water availability, security and countries' boundaries. Vulnerability of a population to climate change depends on how exposed the populace is to extreme weather conditions and what resources the population has that can help them cope with such disasters. Despite the gravity of the question of climate refugees, the international community has not come up with policies to address the plight of this group of people.

By: Valentine O, BA, International Relations, IDIS 2014 – [@ValRaleigh](#)