HOUSE OF LORDS

# Select Committee on the European Union

## Home Affairs Sub-Committee

## Uncorrected oral evidence: Climate change and migration

Wednesday 11 March 2020

11 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Jay of Ewelme (The Chair); Lord Best; Baroness Jolly; Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate; Lord Lexden; Lord McNally; Lord Ricketts; Lord Soley; Lord Watts.

Evidence Session No. 1. Heard in Public Questions 1 - 15

### Witnesses

I: Professor Roger Zetter, Emeritus Professor and Former Director of the Refugee Studies Centre; Dr Caroline Zickgraf, Deputy Director of the Hugo Observatory.

II: Oli Brown, Associate Fellow to the Energy, Environment and Resources Programme at Chatham House; Alex Randall, Climate Change and Migration Project Manager at the Climate and Migration Coalition; Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos, Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Exeter.

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# Examination of witnesses

Professor Roger Zetter and Dr Caroline Zickgraf.

Q1 **The Chairman:** A warm welcome to both of you and thank you for agreeing to give evidence to us. This is a public session which will be recorded. After the end of the session we will send you a transcript of the hearing so that you can make any corrections that may be necessary. The purpose of this session and the one that will immediately follow it is for us to be able to distil from the discussion some key questions which will then go into a formal hearing of the EU Select Committee of the House of Lords with Dr Alok Sharma, who is the Minister for COP 26. So it is helpful to have your advice on that issue.

May I ask you first to introduce yourselves and then to answer initial but fundamental questions about how great a problem climate change and migration pose and what is the most compelling piece of evidence you can provide to support that? We are conscious that there is a tendency to think that everything comes from climate change, whereas a lot of other things lie behind migration. How far is climate change really the underlying factor? We will then come on to some more detailed questions. It would be helpful if you could introduce yourselves and then pass on to that question.

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I am an emeritus professor from the University of Oxford and a former director of the Refugee Studies Centre, which is a world centre for research into forced migration. Although the title contains the word "refugees", it covers a whole range of displaced populations, internally displaced peoples, populations subject to environmental degradation and so on. I am not currently researching this field, although I ran several large research projects on the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on population mobility, focusing particularly on issues of protection and rights of those people made vulnerable as a consequence of those drivers.

One of the projects was commissioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Governments of Norway and Switzerland. Those Governments have been proactive in developing policies and supporting research in this field, particularly the Government of Norway. Another project was funded by a very large American research foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts. The research covered a number of countries where there were different susceptibilities to climate change such as salination of coastal areas, flooding, degradation of deserts and pastoral areas in Kenya and northern Ghana, for example. That is the background and how I hope to contribute to your meeting today.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. Dr Zickgraf, thank you for crossing the Channel to get to us.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** Thank you for having me. I am the deputy director of the Hugo Observatory for Environment, Migration and Politics at the University of Liège in Belgium. This is the first scientific research

centre to be created specifically to study the links between environment—including climate change—migration and politics. It is essentially a political issue as well as an environmental one. On your question about how big a problem it poses, if I had the liberty to rephrase the question, I would pose it as a challenge.

**The Chairman:** It is a good academic technique to rephrase the question.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** I certainly am an academic. I want to pose it as a challenge for a couple of reasons. First, what we do about it is what kind of problem it becomes. It is certainly a governance challenge. It is a challenge that is facing many of the world's populations right now in vulnerable areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa, which is where I do the majority of my work, small island states and deltaic regions where we can already see that climate change is having an impact on how and where people live. It is multicausal.

One of the first things that academics do is to say that it is not just climate change. We cannot isolate it to that extent and it is not desirable to do so because migration is always multicausal. It is always a combination of social, political, economic, environmental and demographic factors. Climate change is a threat multiplier and it is certainly exacerbating people's pre-existing vulnerabilities and things like poverty. Climate change does pose an enormous challenge for populations whose livelihoods are resource dependent, and in some cases that leads to displacement and outright forced migration. But we say this is on a scale because with climate change even voluntary movement is still operating with constraints and to that effect you see this continuum that is created between forced and voluntary and there are blurred lines that do not fit our traditional categories of choice of migration.

To that extent, I thought about what compelling evidence I could give you and I asked myself what compelled me to be convinced by this occurrence. I could read to you from IPCC reports, but I see my role as an expert to bring you evidence from what I do. One of the places I work is not a sensational story of how climate change affects migration or displacement but is just a normal story, unfortunately, in many places.

I work in N'Dar, which is a fishing quarter in St Louis, the second biggest city of Senegal. It is not a rural area but it is a resource-dependent livelihood. In N'Dar, 97% of people are directly dependent on fishing. That is both men and women. These are fishers, fish vendors, people who smoke fish or salt fish. Anything that happens to fish dramatically affects people's ability to feed themselves, to find shelter, basic water and so on. What we are seeing is a collision of two types of impacts.

One is coastal erosion because of sea-level rise and increasing wave intensity, so houses are literally falling into the sea. At the same time you have livelihood impacts such as the decrease in fish stocks as the currents change and the waters change. As one person I interviewed said, "The fish are migrating; so must we". So if the fish are moving and

are not there, you cannot stay there all year round. If you do so, you are signing up for a dramatic decrease in food intake and income. So people are migrating, for example, towards Mauritania. Fishers always migrate, so we have to put this in a historical context, but they are migrating more and for longer periods because livelihoods are unsustainable. That also leads to relocation away from coastal erosion. There are both residential and livelihood threats.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. Professor Zetter, do you agree with that?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I do. It is probably useful for you to have two academics agreeing rather than disagreeing. As Caroline says, it is often useful to view climate change as a tipping point in the context of many other factors that render populations vulnerable to displacement and migration, their declining incomes and many other factors as well as aspirations to move from rural to urban areas to access better education and health, irrespective of climate change. Climate change might just tip that decision.

I would add three other points for discussion in the sense of the challenge that Caroline says it poses. The first is that we are often dealing with slow onset conditions. It is very hard, for example, to detect the changing nature of the salination of paddy fields in Bangladesh, which is changing the local economy from rice farming to shrimp farming, which has implications for local labour and incomes and so on. It is the slow-onset conditions that make it hard to say that climate change is the key driver.

The second factor is that, certainly at the present time—it is hard to predict in 20 or 30 years' time—the vast majority of people who migrate as a result of some of these factors will move within their own countries. Whereas cross-border migration for a variety of political, logistical and legal issues, is much more salient in terms of global discourses, internal movement is harder to detect. It is not registered so clearly, but for those countries that are impacted by these processes it is a substantial problem as cities start to increase in size with all the implications that has for infrastructure and service provision.

The third and perhaps most significant factor is that there is enormous variation within countries, let alone between countries. There is enormous variation over how the factors that we have talked about and other factors that drive migration can impact local communities, even households and their capacities to adapt to changing conditions and changing pressures. One of the big challenges for academics and policymakers is to discern at what level one disaggregates the problem. How fine-grained does one make the research, in particular in villages or particular regions of the country, to determine how this mix of factors is driving the migrants from their local environments to some other locations or economic opportunities. Those are three variables.

In terms of compelling evidence, one factor that always strikes me—and I was looking at the figures the other day—is that in a country like Vietnam, which is highly vulnerable to climate change, particularly

flooding in the Mekong Valley and Mekong Delta, a one-metre rise in sea level, which admittedly is quite large, would inundate 10% of the country’s population. The population is about 100 million. Depending on the figures and how one mixes the variables, probably between 38% to 46% of the remaining population would become vulnerable to other consequences of rising sea levels. The predicted outcomes for the heavily impacted countries are dramatic.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. That is an extremely good introduction to our discussion.

Q2 **Baroness Jolly:** Given that there is no universal definition of this type of migrant and it is difficult to establish causal links between climate change and migration, how are past and predicted figures of this type of migrants calculated, and how reliable is the data?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** Early predictions were very crude and very inaccurate. A figure that is often cited is one calculated very crudely by Norman Myers about 30 years ago, and he admits the difficulties of doing this. He predicted that by the middle of this century about 200 million people would be displaced by climate change. The factors that he brought into his equation were fairly simplistic and he readily admits that. The difficulty is that that figure became a kind of gospel which was recited by many other researchers and national and international policy development processes.

What we see now is a much more sophisticated way of measuring the impacts of climate change. On the one hand, there is a much more sophisticated analysis of the kinds of risks that communities, countries and localities are vulnerable to, so we have to have a much more sophisticated understanding of those processes. On the other side of the equation is a much more sophisticated understanding of how populations, villages, households and communities adapt and the extent to which they can adapt to the impacts of climate change. For example, a not uncommon phenomenon is for one member of the household to migrate from the village to a city or a town where they can access a better income and remit some of the earnings back to the village to sustain the population there. There are also other populations which have no capacity, skills or resources to migrate even if they wanted to make that choice—the so-called trapped populations.

Past predictions are a very crude benchmark and very few of us academically would support or recite those figures, although I have just done so. I would revert to my earlier point that we have to look at this at a localised level to do any fine-grained calibration or calculation to get some kind of metrics of displacement.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** I can only complement the information that Professor Zetter has given. Early estimates produced in the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly those cited by Norman Myers, which are still widely circulated, were guesstimates. Sometimes, in different estimates, they were methodologically opaque. We did not know how they were

calculated. It was not necessarily their intention to give scientifically rigorous numbers, but to call attention to what they perceived as an issue of climate change and to incite climate action.

In other cases, some crude ways of calculating it were to identify regions at risk of climate change impacts, calculate the population that lives there, factor in population growth and there is your number. But, as has been pointed out, that does not really work. Human behaviour is much more complex than that. People are not affected equally, even in vulnerable areas; they have what we call differentiated vulnerability. Your neighbour is not necessarily as vulnerable as you are, whether that is because you have more resources or a stronger home. In some cases you move at different times. Some may be able to move earlier than others, some will have to wait until they become displaced and, as Professor Zetter referenced, in mobile populations this is a particular area of research interest for me. We cannot rely on a deterministic assumption that as climate change goes up migration numbers go up. We see a lot of non-linearities in how migration occurs with climate change.

Depending on the system, we should not be striving for one global figure prediction. We need to look at local regional levels and see what existing migration systems are in place. In many cases, migration systems are able to absorb the shock of environment and, because migration can be an adaptive response, not just a last resort or forced displacement. Considering local vulnerabilities, we see that sometimes a small climate impact can have a huge impact on migration because the systems are not resilient enough to cope with that, and that can result in displacement. On the other hand, you can have bigger climate impacts and less of a change in migration flows because there are potentially traditional coping strategies or adaptation strategies that mean less change in the number of migrants. Calculations are getting better and also modelling. What we are striving for academically is to build scenarios of different ways and what we do change has leverage on these numbers. Just as in climate change we produce multiple scenarios according to different pathways, it should be the same with migration.

Q3 **Lord Soley:** I am not sure yet, even from what you have both said, how useful the term “climate change refugee” really is and how you would classify it.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** I agree. I am not convinced that it is useful either. Similar to the statistics of 200 million people, most academics will not use the term “climate change refugee” for several reasons. One of them is legal. Legally, they are not part of the 1951 Geneva Convention. Also, as was referenced earlier by Professor Zetter, most people migrate internally. To become a refugee, you have to cross the international border, so you can become climate displaced but it does not work legally.

On the more conceptual level, climate change refugee does not allow for the multicausality that we know is present and assumes that we can isolate why people move just to climate change. There is also better pushback against the term from some Pacific islander communities, for

example, because it also does not allow agency in the process. Some communities prefer to talk of "migration with dignity" rather than "climate change refugee" which can imply victimisation of people, and that is not how they perceive the reality. The other idea is that there is migration as adaptation. Climate change refugee does not capture all that complexity of the empirical evidence that migrating can be beneficial. At a basic level it is a survival strategy, but it is also an adaptive response generating social remittances, financial remittances and all these things. Generally, we do not use climate change refugee academically.

**Lord Soley:** Do you agree with that, Professor Zetter?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I certainly do and there is not much that I can add to that powerful argument. The attraction of the term is that the notion that there is a refugee who has been forcibly displaced and there appears to be an obvious driver which is climate change is very compelling in the public image. But, as we have said, the causal relationship is much more complex than that. None the less, it has an immediacy and has an image that captures and dramatises some of the issues that we have been talking about.

I would be very resistant to the notion of refugee being attached to this form of migration and displacement for exactly the reasons that Dr Zickgraf has mentioned. My preference is to use a term like "climate change migrant" or "environment migrant" or "environmentally displaced person". It does not roll off the tongue in quite the same way and it does not fit a headline in the media, but that would be my preference.

We have not collaborated beforehand, so the consensus message you are getting is not something we have agreed.

**The Chairman:** Do not hesitate to disagree.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** We are trying.

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I see the processes we are talking about as a developmental challenge. It is an issue of how countries are developing, how they are developing resilience to the kinds of pressures that we are talking about, perhaps more resilient forms of agriculture, flood protection and more resilient livelihoods. In the context of these kinds of stresses, as Caroline said, many of the populations we are talking about are resilient and adaptive anyway, and have been for centuries, but that process is being accelerated now.

The danger of using the term "refugee" is that it then institutionalises the problem as a problem of migration and law and people not belonging or people crossing borders which, as we know, is very problematic. The response we need to be thinking about to these kinds of issues is a holistic one. It is a developmental challenge across many different ministries of a government in an impacted country. We need to think of it in the context of the sustainable development goals and so on. Using the term "refugee" pigeonholes people wrongly and, in any case, for the

reasons Dr Zickgraf gave, it institutionalises it in a very unacceptable way.

**Lord Soley:** When I thought about what a climate change refugee would be, the only one I could come up with in my own mind was the Pacific islands sinking below the waves, because that is a very clear-cut one related to the climate and where people would have to go somewhere else. Otherwise, I am inclined to think that adaptation and migration internally and externally tend to do it. I am also aware, and I say this as a former west London MP who took refugees from all over the world, we did not stick rigorously to the UN definition because it put people at risk of death for being a homosexual, for example. We took them as a refugee. A refugee is a refugee. You look at the circumstances and make your judgement as to whether a person is a refugee on that basis. Would you agree with that?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** Yes, and I think the difficulty in this context is trying to assess whether the factors that are driving populations away from their habitual environments are an existential threat. I think that is one of the keys. It is not a legal test in the 1951 convention sense but, normatively, the notion of an existential threat against which an individual requires protection, whether it is a 1951 Geneva Convention kind of protection or whether it is some kind of subsidiary or temporary protection, is critical. The difficulty in this context is to say whether there is an existential threat to the individuals precisely because of a climate change variable that has conditioned their displacement.

Q4 **Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** I wanted to touch on this a little further, if I may. I agree with Professor Zetter on the definitions. Looking at it from a political point of view and how governments deal with refugees, we very much rely, rightly in my opinion, on the criteria laid down in the 1951 convention. I know that there have been attempts since then by various bodies and organisations to extend the definition or change it. Personally, I think that is a dangerous thing to do. Once you get into these new territories you come up with all kinds of subjective approaches which cannot necessarily be confirmed by international agreement. The 1951 convention is clearly there, it is an international agreement and it is a basis on which you grant asylum.

I would like your opinion on migration. If we are to make sure that there is a positive reaction, where appropriate, maybe a Pacific island or that sort of thing, in order to keep people on side with this you have to move this away from the strict definitions. I am not quite sure, therefore, where this fits. I know that you have both spoken of this in your early remarks but I am not very happy about the situation here because, unless we can find a better definition and better set of circumstances and criteria to be applied, we are not going to be able to take public opinion but also move this thing along in a way that is appropriate to changing circumstances. Have you both any other views as to how we might do it, where we might categorise this, what kind of international agreements we should be looking for here as opposed to the ad hoc proposals that keep coming at us?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I think the way you have constructed the problem is entirely right. My starting point is that I would be personally very reluctant to extend the framework of the 1951 convention because, as we know already, the 1951 convention and 1967 protocol are problematic for countries, to say the least. We are well aware of pushback and denial of asylum in many countries for people who would legitimately have that claim. Trying to extend the scope of the 1951 convention to environmental climate change migrants would diminish the rights and the access to protection of those who do face the existential threats that we were discussing earlier.

It then poses the question of how we deal with an increasing number of people who may be on the move for all kinds of mixed migration factors, of which climate change is one. Some of the Nordic countries adopted an interesting response to this. Fifteen or 20 years ago, the Governments of Finland and Sweden provided in their immigration legislation temporary protection for those made vulnerable because of climate change. I did not follow that up to know whether any claims were made or whether they were successful, but certainly those countries recognised the possibility, particularly in respect to what we would call rapid onset, for those who could definably say that their village was flooded and that they had moved out. It would be much harder to make that claim with the slow-onset displacement.

**Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** This temporary respite or protection is available under our arrangements here and, indeed, by implication we often apply some sort of criteria such as "When things get right in your state, where there is a despot you cannot live with and who is going to kill you, when the despot is gone we expect you to return to your home".

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** This was the government policy with the Bosnian refugees which lasted two years, but I do not think that those conditions have been invoked in the context that we are talking about.

Another approach that has some mileage was promoted by a governmental process called the Nansen Initiative which was set up by the Norwegian Government. The representative, Professor Walter Kaelin, who is very well known in our field as an international lawyer focusing on these issues, promoted what he called regional responses. He said that to the extent that there is going to be a problem of cross-border movements as a result of climate change disasters and other factors, rather than trying to construct a global convention, which many of us would agree would be impossible, or even trying to expand the 1951 convention, let us look at it in terms of regional impacts. Let us look at it and see whether we can get consensus in regions which are affected where populations already move across borders anyway. Those borders are often permeable. The populations might be migrating pastoral farmers anyway. Let us look and see if we can develop some kind of regional apparatus.

There are other opportunities, but those are two examples of the way that that issue could be addressed. What we do not know is in 20 or 30

years' time, if the impacts of climate change become extremely severe and population mobility rises, whether that kind of slightly ad hoc apparatus will be sufficient or whether globally we would have to move to some kind of convention with a definition of an environmentally displaced person or refugee, which is problematic academically from the research point of view and politically as well.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** I would agree. I think opening up or making modifications to the 1951 Geneva Convention is largely not the academic impulse because of all the dangers that that potentially presents, such as if you open it up whether you can close it again and how difficult it is already to address issues of asylum and refugees. It is not always about creating new mechanisms. In some cases we can also rely on existing complementary protection, as has been the case. We just have to look at them with a climate lens. There are temporary protections and there can be provision of humanitarian visas. Temporary protection changes when there is no possibility of returning, but there are already places in the world where when a disaster strikes, such as Haiti, for example, the US offered humanitarian visas.

There are other mechanisms that we already put in place that can be utilised with the idea of climate change in mind, for example, bilateral agreements or regional mobility agreements. IGAD in east Africa is a free-movement protocol specifically addressed to disasters where people may need to move pre-emptively as well as after a disaster and that would be incorporated into the free movement protocol. We already have free movement protocols. There are things like bilateral labour agreements. When labour is needed, as it often is, and countries often make agreements between each other to have migrants come and fill certain gaps in their labour market, you can also, and it has been done, target places that are disaster-prone or at climate risk for those labour migrants. It is not always just about temporary protections, but we can also use existing mechanisms and adapt them to the new realities of climate change.

**The Chairman:** We are going to have to speed up a bit because we have some important questions to come to and we want to move on to our next panel at about 11.50 if we can. So a quick question from Lord Soley and then on to Lord McNally.

Q5 **Lord Soley:** Ioane Teitiota, a national from the Republic of Kiribati, brought a case to the Human Rights Committee. When he lost his case at the committee, it ruled that a country should have consideration for the climate factors before it ordered a deportation. Do you think that case is going to lead to more cases of that type, or is it a bit of a one-off?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** It is very salient in our discussions and certainly among international lawyers it has created a lot of interest. There will be other cases. My assessment is that there will not be many. The sense that it is a landmark decision is perhaps slightly overstated at this stage. What was interesting is that the committee concluded that the deportation was legal. The application was not upheld. The deportation

was considered legal under the terms in which the case was brought, primarily because it was not considered to be an existential threat. If a case was brought where the judgment could clearly support the claim of an existential threat then the case might have been upheld, but the critical thing was that there was not considered to be an immediate threat to life.

**Lord Soley:** It is not likely to lead to many more cases.

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I guess the consequence will be that, if other cases are brought, they will be brought on the basis of a much clearer definition of an existential threat.

The second point is that it was brought under the jurisdiction of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is not under international refugee law, where the conditions of refoulement are much more tightly prescribed in law and in normative practice. One could say that the international covenant is much more lenient or compliant than an interpretation under the 1951/67 convention.

**The Chairman:** We should move on. Lord McNally.

Q6 **Lord McNally:** Should countries like the UK be preparing for large-scale influxes of people migrating as a result of climate change and, if so, what steps should we take in those preparations?

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** In order to be short, so we can answer as many questions as possible, no, I do not think that the UK should expect mass influxes of people, whether we call them climate refugees or climate migrants, for precisely the reasons that have already been put into evidence that the majority of migration is internal. When it is not internal, it is to neighbouring countries. The idea that there will be massive numbers of people arriving or floods—to use this water language—of migrants to European shores is overstated and sensationalised and not to be expected. It will be much more regional. I do think that the UK will experience climate displacement with coastal flooding and things like that, so you might have to think about the UK's experience. People are already displaced by coastal flooding and evacuated by coastal flooding in the UK, so that is a different issue from expecting a massive number of people.

**The Chairman:** Do you mean internally?

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** Yes. It does not mean that nothing should be done, but not necessarily in preparing for massive numbers of migrants.

**Lord McNally:** That has not been the reality over the last 40 years. I went to a conference in Helsinki in December where the Scandinavians, with all their reputation for liberalism, have said how migration has distorted their politics. One of the problems is that—and it is not just climate—if you tell people, and I am glad you would take away the 200 million or whatever, that there are going to be large movements of people and our duty is to understand and accept them, they will turn to

others who say, "No, our duty is to build walls". One of the things that you as academics and we as politicians have got to do is turn the debate. There has got be emphasis on resilience and adaptation. We have got to convince people that our aid and development programmes are part of this problem because people find solutions within their own societies. Otherwise, I fear that the democratic political systems are not robust enough to resist the populism that the statistics bring about.

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I think that is absolutely right. I revert to what I said earlier that I think it is an international development challenge in precisely the terms that you have described of developing resilience and capacity within countries and within regions rather than seeing the issue as one of large-scale migration which, although migration might increase to Europe and the UK, will not be primarily climate driven.

Q7 **Lord Watts:** In your opinion, how has Brexit affected attitudes in the UK towards immigration? Will Brexit have a long-term effect on the UK's response to human migration, including that caused by climate change?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** That is perhaps the most political question you have asked. Speaking as an academic rather than anecdotally, there is research evidence that Brexit certainly has polarised the arguments around migration in Europe as well as Britain. We are obviously concerned about our own country, but it is not a unique challenge that we face in Britain. It is a challenge that faces the global north, including America and all the European countries. I think it has polarised opinion towards migration.

The most problematic aspect is that it has polarised opinion particularly around those who are most vulnerable, such as refugees and those who are seeking asylum, who in popular public discourse are grouped as migrants and migration is a problem. That is a major concern. It will inevitably translate into a concern to resist any form of migration, whether it is specifically climate-change driven migration or any other variables that we might be thinking about. There is research evidence already to show that Brexit has polarised those issues, but not Brexit alone because there are other kinds of political dynamics in other European countries such as Germany which have created precisely the same polarisation.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** If I may add one thing to that? According to the British Election Study and the European Social Survey, there has been some softening of anti-immigrant attitudes since Brexit. However, more important than that, what we are seeing in relation to climate change is that attitudes are not equal towards every country, towards certain types of populations but also certain countries. I am a Belgian academic, but attitudes in the UK are very different towards Australian migrants as opposed to Nigerian migrants. That becomes important when you talk about where people are going to be most vulnerable to climate change because those countries are going to fall more into the anti-immigrant attitudes. Australia is affected but, even if attitudes have shown a slight

softening, it depends whom we are talking about and that becomes important for climate change.

**Lord Watts:** I am not familiar with the research that you have just quoted. Do you think that is due to the fact that the British public, for example, think that Brexit has meant that they have now got control of migration so it is less of a threat than it was before? Is that in the report or highlighted?

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** I am not familiar with that level of detail in the surveys that have been conducted. The European Social Survey has been conducted across many countries. We could speculate about why that is. It is potentially because they see that an action has taken place. You do see a difference between leave and remain in those surveys as to more welcoming and more anti-immigrant attitudes. It could be because other things are a priority or priorities shift. For example, the European Union becomes more important because they also ask, "What is the most important issue?" and immigration has fallen a bit on that. It could be because of Brexit or it could be because Brexit has pushed the European Union to be more of a point of debate.

**Lord Watts:** The answer to our question is that you both believe it has hardened attitudes to migration. Do you think that is likely to be the long-term effect or is it just a short-term effect? Has a permanent shift taken place?

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I can only speculate. There is no research evidence looking at predicted behaviour or predicted attitudes as opposed to current attitudes. My guess would be that it is not a permanent change, but what would have an effect on long-term attitudes is whether governments deliver migration controls in the sense that the public would want them. In the end, the test of how hard attitudes are to migration will be on how successful government policies are and how they are perceived to be successful by the populace in general. It is extremely hard to predict. At the moment, there has been a hardening of attitudes, perhaps a bit softened after 31 January. Predicting in the longer term is going to be very much a point in time kind of reflection rather than being able to predict long-term attitudinal changes to these kinds of issues.

Q8 **Lord Lexden:** Could we return to the implications for the international community on which you both touched to some extent and, in particular, how should the international community assess the level of danger required for an individual or group to need to migrate? How should the international community assess the level of safety in each country and, having made those assessments, how should the international community respond?

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** This is a difficult question for academics who are not necessarily involved in these decisions. When thinking about this, I can understand why we would need to have some way of assessing when someone needs to migrate, for example, identifying social tipping points and not just climate tipping points at which point we see people tip into

migration, as discussed earlier, and how we, to some extent, agree upon that.

One way to begin that work, which has not yet taken place, is to look at the Task Force on Displacement, which is within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change created under the Paris agreement. It is not currently part of the mandate of the Task Force on Displacement. However, we have seen the mandate of the task force shift. We are also considering how COP takes place and how we could potentially make that part of the work of the task force to start thinking about bringing in multiple voices that reflect all these regional and local variations to assess danger and safety. This would not be a top-down approach but rather a ground-up manifestation in the task force.

Q9 **Lord Ricketts:** That is a good bridge on to the last question which is about COP 26 in Glasgow and how we can make sure that what the Government should be doing is relevant to these issues. I was ambassador in Paris in the run up to COP 21 and the Paris agreement. I saw how much work was put in by French Ministers and experts before that. Do you think that the British Government are focused on the right things in the run-up to COP 26, for example the sorts of issues that you have just mentioned, or are there other things that should be priorities now, given how close we are and how little time we have to prepare? Brief comments from both of you, if you may, so we can finish within the Chairman's time.

***Professor Roger Zetter:*** I am sure that Caroline will talk about some of the issues but, from my point of view, one aspect that the Government could promote more strongly is encouraging the capacity of the most impacted countries to develop stronger rights regimes within the rights of displaced people within their own countries. There are the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which you may be familiar with. It is not a binding convention, but they are advisory guiding principles for countries to provide protection and support for people who are displaced within their own countries before, during and after displacement. Many of the countries that we are talking about that are highly impacted by displacement effects have not rigorously embraced those rights and principles and there are good reasons for that, partly because it is going to cost money if you start to protect people by providing temporary settlements and so on.

Promoting the rights of IDPs at regional levels is important but the corollary of that, and reverting to a point I made earlier, is that that requires resources and developmental support for those countries. One of the huge obligations, particularly on global north countries like Britain, is the extent to which we can continue to support the funding of initiatives like the task force and whether we can adapt our development strategies in some of these impacted countries so that those development strategies are more focused on climate change impacts in those countries and developing, as we said earlier, adaptive and resilience policies.

Focusing our development strategies on some of the impacts of climate change is a much bigger political and policy agenda than climate change per se, but reshaping our development strategies in the context of this emerging challenge is crucial. That then feeds through into funding particular streams of work and activities, both within the UNFCCC but also within countries with which we have strong developmental links.

***Dr Caroline Zickgraf:*** One point is to support and highlight the work of the Task Force on Displacement. Do not consider that the creation of the task force is the end of the work of the UNFCCC, that we have ticked the box and can move on. The second would be to partner with events and delegations to highlight the issues that show partnerships between developing countries and developed countries and the discussions that need to be had. The third would be to bring everyone to the table from the United Kingdom. What we rarely see in the climate negotiations are representatives of migration policy or people who know how migration policy is designed and implemented. Last year in Spain was the first time we saw a Minister who was responsible for migration at COP. That says a lot. They are rarely there. We are separating these and saying, "You are working on climate change and you are working on migration" and never the two shall meet. That is precisely the problem, because we develop opinions and strategies within the climate sphere and we develop them within the migration sphere regarding the climate and global compact, for example, and we do not have the discussions that link them. Bringing those people to COP and making sure that they have a role there is fundamental to the success of the COP but also as a demonstration to other countries in future COPs as to the importance of these issues.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. That is a good note on which to end this section of the evidence. Thank you very much indeed.

## Examination of witnesses

Oli Brown, Alex Randall and Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos.

Q10 **The Chair:** Welcome to you all. Thank you very much for coming and giving evidence to us. I think that you were all here for at least part of the last session. The purpose of this evidence session is for us to be properly informed on some of the issues of climate change and migration so that we can then help the EU Committee as a whole to formulate the questions to ask Dr Sharma in a few days' time. We will adapt the questions that we have already asked to focus on things that matter to us.

Could you introduce yourselves? After that, we will move on to a question from Baroness Jolly.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I am a lecturer at the University of Exeter. Over the past eight years I have been doing empirical research on climate change and migration and understanding the complexities between these two issues. Most of my research has been conducted in

South Asia and West Africa. I am very happy that the Committee is interested in understanding the complexity of these two phenomena and hosting this session. I am happy to take questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

***Alex Randall:*** I run an organisation called the Climate Migration Coalition. We are a network of refugee and migration rights organisations that focuses on how that sector will respond to climate change. These are the key defining questions for our organisation: what will it mean to be a refugee or migration rights organisation on a hotter planet in two or three decades' time, and what will be the implications for the work of those organisations and the people whom they assist?

***Oli Brown:*** Thank you for taking up this issue. I am an associate fellow with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, otherwise known as Chatham House, famous for its rule. In a previous life, I was with the UN Environment Programme, where I co-ordinated its work on disasters and conflicts and was its focal point on migration issues.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I will skip the first question that I asked in our previous session about how great a problem climate change is. I do not doubt that you will weave a response to that question into your answers as we go through. Perhaps I can move straight to Baroness Jolly.

Q11 **Baroness Jolly:** Given that there is no universal definition of this type of migrant and that it is also particularly difficult to establish causal links between climate change and migration, how are past and predicted figures about this type of migrant calculated and how reliable is this data?

**The Chair:** By the way, you do not all have to answer all the questions if you think that the answer already given is broadly what you would have said.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** Particularly over the past 20 years or so, empirical research has been trying to unpack the strength of the climate change or environmental signal to migration and human mobility more broadly. For most of the time, research has focused on understanding whether climate change or environmental hazards impact migration. We are now moving beyond that to understanding the how and why.

When it comes to modelling exercises that seek to project future impacts of climate change on migration worldwide, for example, I can comment on a very recent report commissioned by the World Bank. The *Groundswell* report was released last year. In effect, it combined a series of other modelling techniques such as gravity models and land and water resource models to identify the extent to which those dimensions would impact on migration. The result was that most of that mobility is internal. I think that this alludes to some of the answers given by the other panellists that the vast majority of climate-driven mobility will be internal. It focuses on three different countries, which are Bangladesh, Mexico and a country in Africa that I cannot quite remember now. The

strength of the technique is that you can project the future impact depending on scenarios of emissions, concentrations of $CO_2$ and other dynamics involving population growth or scarcity of food and water.

Those models provide a good template through which we can try to understand this. However, they do not take into account changes in policy or differences in the scenarios that they are using to project those figures. They are very useful techniques. There has been quite a lot of recent research making use of those models. We can use them as a base. They are fairly reliable, so we can use the figures. The vast majority of migration will be internal, not international.

***Oli Brown:*** I do not want to repeat what has been said before. I will give one point of context. I do not need to tell you this, but the world is in a process of immense change. Mobility of money, ideas and people is changing dramatically fast. This is the context against which this climate migration, whatever we term it, will take place. Already, 750 million people migrate within their own countries. A quarter of a billion people live outside the country of their birth. I am a migrant: I live in France. My two daughters, Alice and Nora, are learning French and have an American mother. The history of Britain is a history of migration. The Commonwealth is an example of migration. That is accelerating. The speed of that movement is changing. That is one of the reasons why it is hard to disaggregate the additional climate impact on top of that.

The way I see it is that climate change is redrawing maps of the world—where the coastline is, where rain falls, where people can grow food and where hurricanes hit. That has a tremendous impact on where people can live in the short or long term. We are quite good at knowing how many people are displaced in the short term. We know that between 25 million and 30 million people are displaced by natural disasters every year. You can then calculate how much of that is related to climate change. As Professor Zetter said, what is more difficult is understanding how many people will be displaced as a result of these slow-onset disasters—the creeping inability to feed your family or the impact on a particular country's economic stability. As Ricardo was saying, we are getting a lot better at working out future scenarios and disaggregating what is happening now.

**The Chair:** That is very helpful. Thank you. Would you like to add anything, Mr Randall?

***Alex Randall:*** I would like to reinforce what my colleague has just said. Patterns of migration and displacement have changed fundamentally over the past decade, the decade before and the one before that. We can promise that, in 10 or 20 years' time, the patterns of migration and displacement will be different from what they are now. We cannot hope that we will be able to heat the planet up by one, two or three degrees and that somehow miraculously that will have no bearing on the patterns of migration and displacement. The effect will be there.

The way that we understand and are able to predict that is improving year on year. The models are getting better. We are becoming more able to make predictions and more able to disaggregate the different drivers of migration from individual people's experiences of moving. There is still a level of uncertainty in the future.

Perhaps the challenge for you as policymakers, as people who will have to plan for this, is around what kind of policies you can support to deal with that level of unpredictability? Are there policies that will be effective whether the impact is very large or very small? Can things be done that are perhaps agnostic on the scale of climate-linked migration? That is a way to approach it from a policy angle, to understand that a level of unpredictability has to be built into the decisions taken.

**The Chair:** I have one follow-up question. In 10, 15 or 20 years' time, will the problems be more intense than now?

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** Yes, that is very likely. We understand that, at the moment, based on empirical findings in the research that we have done, people tend not to self-report that they are moving because of an environmental signal unless it is a type of last-resort migration—if they are fleeing for their lives after a rapid-onset event such as a cyclone or rapid flooding. We understand that there is a very strong underlying signal that the slow onset, as Oli just mentioned, erodes livelihoods, particularly for those living in marginal areas and relying on ecosystem-based livelihoods. If climate change continues to increase as projected, the erosion in livelihoods will become the main factor that eventually drives people away from their homelands into urban centres or further afield.

Q12 **Lord Soley:** Is the term "climate change refugee" useful or not?

***Alex Randall:*** It is not a term that I use in my work. I think that there are good reasons for not building it into law and policy. In my view, the key one among them is that it implies some kind of legal protection resulting from the refugee convention. The fact that it has "refugee" in it leads the public, people who may potentially be seeking asylum and policymakers to believe that the refugee convention and refugee law more broadly is the correct place for this issue to be addressed. You have heard from the previous panel that the rough consensus is that it is not.

The other really important reason that we do not use it in our work is that people facing displacement do not like the term themselves. They do not wish to apply it to themselves as individuals. If you speak to people from some of the Pacific island states, such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, they actively reject the term "climate refugee". They do not wish to become that. Instead, they promote a way of looking at their own potential mobility in terms of dignity: given that, in some cases, their migration is inevitable, what would it look like to do that in a dignified way that allows them to move with respect, maintain some of their community cohesion, become part of a new community in other country and find work?

"Refugee" does not imply any of that, so they actively push back against it. That is a good reason for us not to use it.

***Oli Brown:*** I will add something very quickly in addition to the very sophisticated discussion that Caroline and Roger had before, as well as the other points. I resist using the idea of a refugee because of all of those arguments. Frankly, it also risks weakening the existing refugee system that we have. We already know that the protections afforded to refugees are incredibly politicised and difficult. Frankly, there is already a bit of a compassion deficit in the world today in that area. Thinking about people claiming asylum—I know that this has been a very present issue in the House of Lords recently—this Government were not even able to support the idea of family reunification for child refugees. If we cannot even do that as a country, expanding that definition and packing even more into it really risks the existing protections, which I worry are quite fragile at the moment for genuine political refugees.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I will give a really brief answer. We avoid using "climate refugees" in academic circles, because it invites a very deterministic view of the issue and other mispredictions that my other colleagues have alluded to. Numbers go from 250 million refugees to 1 billion, which was released in a Christian Aid report in 2017. Those numbers tend to invite really deterministic views of mobility.

**The Chair:** I think that both panels have been very clear on that point. It has been very helpful.

Q13 **Lord McNally:** Should countries, including the UK, be preparing for large-scale influxes of people migrating as a result of climate change? If so, what steps should we take in such preparations?

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I think that this was mentioned by other colleagues: based on empirical findings, the vast majority of mobility resulting from climate change or environmental impact is very likely to be domestic—within borders of countries—with some spillover through to neighbouring countries. In the academic community, we do not expect that climate change will result in large flows of migrants moving from West Africa or South Asia to the UK. The UK and other developed world countries should focus their efforts on providing adaptation responses and building resilience for those communities that are very likely to be impacted by climate change and future environmental hazards.

**Lord McNally:** The problem for policymakers and politicians is that the very people who are most hostile to the concept of refugees or asylum seekers are also the most hostile to ideas of development aid, generous trade policies or anything else.

I must ask a question that keeps on sticking in my mind. If you look across sub-Saharan Africa, there are a number of countries with high birth rates and large-scale poverty that are basically Islamic states and are also suffering from climate change. There is not just one element. I noticed recently that there has been talk of putting together some kind of

western defence programme because these countries could and already are becoming a seedbed for a new centre of Islamic fundamentalism.

What happens next? We will pour lots of money into sending troops to that part of the world and fighting endless wars, as we have in the Middle East. How do we change the debate? As somebody said, it is so compartmentalised that there is climate change on the one hand and the compassion industry on the other. We will not solve this unless we can draw these arguments together—which is the responsibility of academics, as you well know.

**The Chair:** Well, that is fairly straightforward, is it not?

***Oli Brown:*** I will make a very quick point on this. There is an interesting assumption underlying all this discussion that migration is inherently problematic. This comes back to the point I made early on that migration is an incredibly powerful way of building connectedness across the world. It spreads ideas. I am obviously biased, because I am a migrant myself. Many of us have been. I have lived in five countries in the past 10 years. It has enriched me tremendously, and I hope that it has not damaged the countries in which I have been living.

One of the things that we have to do and that politicians can do is change the narrative around migration necessarily being a problem and focus on some of the positive things around it. Allied to that, where there is forced migration that is unsafe, irregular and disorderly, there is a lot that can be done to build resilience in those communities and to help them manage those transitions, such as providing temporary visas in specific circumstances.

I agree with everybody else in answering no to the initial question about whether Britain should expect large-scale influxes of climate migrants. I am not getting into the Brexit question here; it is because Britain controls its borders, or, prior to the withdrawal from the European Union, Britain controlled its borders within a regional context. It effectively chooses who comes in. That is why there will not be a large-scale influx of migrants here—not necessarily because there will not be large movements of people but because Britain and Europe in general will not let them in.

***Alex Randall:*** I agree with the rest of the panel: do not begin planning for large-scale climate-linked migration into the UK. That is not how the climate migration dynamic functions. Migration will be primarily in the global south, internally and between neighbouring countries. However, I do not think that means that the UK can sort of sit back and go, "Okay, we do not have to engage with this". There are a number of very important things that I believe that the UK should be doing.

First among those is really thinking about how aid and development spending is deployed to have an impact on this. Two key things have been raised. The first is the idea of building resilience against climate change to help people maintain their livelihood where they are. That is good, but it will take us only a certain distance. We know that climate

change will progressively erode livelihoods, especially agricultural ones, to a point where some people will still have to move, no matter how much we invest in helping them survive those impacts.

That raises a question for aid and development policy: is there a way that we can deploy that finance to help people migrate and build a new life somewhere else more stable before they reach the point of being displaced in the middle of a crisis? I will not deny that it is a controversial idea, but I think that we have to consider using aid and development money to help people move before they are displaced. That is really a choice between helping people move in an organised, dignified and manageable way or waiting for it to look like and essentially be a humanitarian crisis, with all the problems that come with that.

**The Chair:** Are any of the large international aid agencies thinking in those terms or are you ahead of their game?

***Alex Randall:*** Unfortunately, Dina was not able to join the earlier panel. IOM, the UN Migration Agency, holds "migration as adaptation", as the phrase has it, in high regard. It considers how it can assist states with turning that idea into policy. Hopefully, Dina's written evidence will cover that.

***Oli Brown:*** I have one very quick anecdote on that. We were talking about Kiribati before. In your initial question, you were asking for the really compelling piece of evidence for climate migration. It was something of a political stunt, but the former President of Kiribati, Anote Tong, bought land in Fiji as a pre-emptive measure to move his population. If you think what buying land in another nation state because you think that your entire population will be displaced as a result of climate change involves, it is a tremendously powerful symbol.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** There have been bilateral collaborations between countries and other forms of mobility responses, one of which is planned relocation: there have been initiatives between the Dutch embassy and the Government of Bangladesh to help Bangladesh coastal communities to relocate if they are threatened by extreme sea levels through sea level rise, storm surges or coastal erosion. The UK as a country could be thinking in its international policy about how to partner and collaborate with vulnerable countries that will need support on the ground to respond to the threats of climate change.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. You have been very helpful.

Q14 **Lord Watts:** As you probably heard from the back of the room, I have the political question. In your opinion, how has Brexit affected attitudes in the UK towards immigration? In your view, will Brexit have a long-term effect on the UK's response to human migration, including that related to climate change?

***Oli Brown:*** That is a tough question. My sense is that Brexit has weaponised migration as a political issue. You are the experts in political perception and how that translates into policies. With migration and

refugee policy in general, I see that facts do not drive the policies but perception. Looking at the numbers that we are talking about—for example, of unaccompanied child refugees who looked to be reunited with their families—in my view, the political response was out of proportion to the numbers in play.

The challenge with migration and refugees is that they are inherently different people: they are the easiest to "other" and "us and them". They are very convenient people to blame as scapegoats in any political discussion. As we have seen with the rise of the populist approach to politics, migration and this looming threat—which we saw on the side of buses, UKIP posters and everything else—of Turkey joining the EU or refugees coming in becomes an incredibly potent symbol that is used to drive a different political agenda. This comes back to my point about how politicians play a crucial role in bringing the debate back to facts and focusing the policies on these rather than on perceptions.

I think that Brexit has changed Britain's views on immigration. I worry that it has become a toxic issue and is having a chilling effect on new initiatives around migration and on showing international co-operation that we will never know about because they will not have happened. I think that this will have a longer but quiet impact that we will be dealing with for some time.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I will build on what Oli said. Caroline also alluded to this. There have been a number of social surveys measuring Britain's response to immigration. One was released last year, an Ipsos MORI survey that found that 40% of Britons believe that migration enriches the culture of the nation.

**The Chair:** What proportion was that?

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** It was 40%. I am also a migrant and have been for most of my life: I have lived in five different countries as well. We understand that there has been a radical shift in views on migration, but the people living in this country believe that it brings a positive component to culture and lifestyle, which is reassuring from a migrant's point of view.

On the other hand, when it comes to responding to issues around human migration associated with climate change, co-operation is relevant. The UK will have to extend its co-operations with other EU countries and beyond, because responses on the ground to climate change and other issues will be shaped through it. Co-operation will help to mediate the flow of migrants and help to understand where the more pressing issues will be. I insist and would like to make public that the UK has to strengthen its co-operation with the EU in managing its borders.

**Lord Watts:** Is it not likely that the populism that we saw through Brexit and its effect on migration will feed through to other things such as overseas aid and co-operation? Is it not the case that the trend, not just here but in America, seems to be to put walls up: "It is not our problem,

we are not interested and we want to spend our money on ourselves"? I think that that is likely to be the result of the Brexit vote. What is your view on that?

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I really insist that it is about more than where the country will spend its resources. We all know what happened during the Syrian refugee crisis: in a sense, the EU did not co-operate as it should have. Most of the effect was felt by Germany, Sweden and Italy. We know the number of lives that have been lost in the sea and in the tragedy. If we are thinking about climate change and future responses, one of which might be an increase in migration flows, co-operation between European countries and further afield among and across the world's countries should be one of the main strategies.

Q15 **Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** We know our proposals for COP 26. We are very proud to be hosting it in this country. However, there have been a few hiccups so far in its planning, location, et cetera. What do you think that the aspiration should be for this country in hosting it? In having possibly determined yourselves the kind of agenda that it will follow, where do you think that there might be gaps in that agenda? Do you think or have hopes that it will concentrate on the right things or not? If there are gaps, what are they and how should they be filled? What do you feel about our hosting of this and using it to help with the issues that we have been discussing this morning?

***Alex Randall:*** I obviously think that it is positive that the UK is hosting COP. That is good news. There is a wider debate about what the UK should push for in emissions reduction, adaptation finance and every aspect of the COP process, which I do not pretend to be an expert on. I can point to a few key areas. If the UK Government wanted to highlight the connections between climate change, migration and displacement and the ways that those are discussed and debated at the COP, I think that some useful things could be done.

As the previous panel mentioned, there is a task force on displacement that is part of the COP process. Within the Conference of the Parties process there is an official area in which the connections between climate change and displacement are to be discussed, agreed on and debated. There is a format in which that conversation between nations can take place. The UK's willing participation in that part of the process—being there at the table—is important.

There are perhaps more theoretical ideas that the UK could try to bring to the table as well. The idea of migration as a way of adapting to climate change is really key. It is not discussed in very much detail as part of the COP process at the moment and I think that it should be. There are big questions about adaptation finance and how that could be deployed to build resilience and assist people in staying if possible, or potentially to help people move in an organised and managed way. I appreciate that those are potentially controversial ideas that you may not want to try to inject into the process in Glasgow. However, my view is that they are important.

***Oli Brown:*** I have two additional points. The first is that Britain could push for a really ambitious agreement on avoiding dangerous climate change in the first place. I think that there was already some discussion about how there was a huge diplomatic push in advance of Paris, where every single ambassador around the world had it as their top talking point for the 18 months beforehand. I think that Britain is quite a long way behind on that. The coronavirus and limits on travel now probably make it a bit more difficult to get that diplomatic push and to go around to every single key nation that may perhaps have a big impact on the negotiations to try to convince them to increase the level of ambition of their own nationally determined contributions to mitigating climate change.

The second point has not really come up so much yet. We have two global compacts—one on refugees and one on safe, orderly and regular migration—that were negotiated over two years and signed at the end of 2018. They are voluntary and have been signed up to by between 150 and 180 different countries. They have lots of sensible points in them. They are the very beginnings of emerging norms on how to deal with refugee situations and some of these issues that we are talking about now. It seems to me that the two global compacts, which I have here, are slipping beneath the waves. I am hearing very little about them. There was a huge effort to negotiate them and they are almost never mentioned. A really concrete thing that the UK Government could do is to try to profile these, bring them back into the global discussion and get countries to sign up and implement the very sensible and pragmatic things that the compacts suggest.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** From a researcher’s point of view, I think that it is great that the UK is hosting COP 26. It gives us a platform to talk about some of our most recent findings and engage with the decision-makers, policymakers and practitioners. We understand that the research councils and DfID have funded substantial amounts of research on climate adaptation, and we have discussed here that migration is one of the many mechanisms by which some communities and individuals might adapt to future and ongoing climate change.

I would like to see a move from a conversation about whether and to what extent climate change impacts on migration and mobility to unpacking how and why. We need to understand the mechanisms by which a future sea level rise will impact livelihoods, and what responses can be put in place in the areas that have been impacted, as opposed to just thinking that a sea level rise will generate X, Y or Z number of climate refugees. We need to go beyond that conversation, leave it in the past and understand how the future climate change impacts on mobility and why.

**Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate:** I am hearing you speak. A lot of people have their own particular preferences about what should be debated and what action should be taken as a result of hosting this. Having read the various indications from the British Government about how they might

use this conference, are you optimistic that we will see a conference that will be useful for your priorities as much as anything else?

**The Chair:** Put another way, if we ask you back here in a year's time, will you tell us that it made a real difference or was a lost opportunity?

***Oli Brown:*** I am not optimistic. That is my short answer. I think that the British Government are some way behind with the diplomatic push that they need to do around this. The general headwinds in favour of co-operative international action around shared environmental and development challenges have become a lot more difficult. We have spent 70 years building up a system of international co-operation, and the last 10 years have seen that really fraying at the edges in a number of ways—not just with Brexit but with Trump and a whole variety of other issues. I really fear that this whole system of international co-operation born out of the devastation of the Second World War is fragmenting before our eyes.

**The Chair:** Do you the rest of you share that view, or will you give us a more optimistic finale?

***Alex Randall:*** I am afraid that I share that view. However, what Oli has outlined there, correct as it is, is not particularly changed by the fact that the UK is hosting. It is a global trend. If the UK wants to see an opportunity in hosting COP, it is to try to up that global trend and make this a more co-operative COP to the extent that that is possible. Although I think that the pessimism there is realistic, it is not completely insoluble through the efforts of the UK Government in the run-up to the meeting in Glasgow.

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** From a researcher's point of view, I am optimistic.

**The Chair:** Did you say that you are or not?

***Dr Ricardo Safra de Campos:*** I am. As I said before, there has been a lot of new research and emerging findings that we can discuss and share with you, the policymakers. On the other hand, I am pessimistic about the uptake of that. We have been generating quite a lot of scientific evidence, particularly on how migration and mobility interact with climate change and environmental hazards. However, we do not see a lot of uptake. We do not see concrete action on the ground, building resilience for the impacted communities and designing and planning policies that will address the issue of mobility associated with climate change.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much indeed. It has been an extremely helpful morning for us. I thank both panels, since you are all still here. I cannot say that we ended on the most optimistic note. None the less, we are very grateful to you. As I said to the earlier panel, this is a public session. We will send you a transcript shortly after we finish for you to look at and make corrections to. Thank you very much to all of you.