



European
Network on
Statelessness



The Open
University



Middle East
Centre



WHY CITIZENSHIP IS RELEVANT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and impacts

Communities without access to citizenship are often unable to access the tools needed for resilience in the face of the effects of climate change or are forced to live in regions susceptible to such effects.¹

Climate change is making some places uninhabitable. For example, rising sea levels even threaten the continued existence of some small island States, putting citizens at risk of losing their country of citizenship.²

Communities without access to citizenship may be overlooked in development monitoring and democratic consultation, which risks losing their input into slow-onset climate change early warning systems.³

WHAT TO CONSIDER:

- (a) Are communities without access to citizenship being considered in national resilience and adaptivity programmes?
- (b) Does global climate change-related planning include supporting small island developing states and other national groups whose territories are at risk of being lost or of becoming uninhabitable as a result of either slow-onset climate change or severe weather events?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The 2015 global consultation on the Nansen Initiative⁴ (a State-led process aiming to build consensus around protection for people displaced by disasters and the effects of climate change) explicitly acknowledged the risk of statelessness for those displaced by climate change.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE:

In 2014, acknowledging the likely disappearance of the territory of Kiribati in the future, the then President began to develop a relocation strategy based on the principle of 'migration with dignity'. This included the purchase of 5,460 acres of land in Fiji. More work is needed to understand the nature of Kiribati citizenship and rights in the case of such dispersal.

LINKS TO OTHER SDGS:

Plans for climate change resilience must include long-term planning to ensure access to clean water and sanitation is not compromised for communities affected, including those without citizenship or at risk of statelessness (SDG6).

Though often prevented from land ownership, many communities without access to citizenship are dependent on resources of the land and sea for survival (SDG14, SDG15).

¹ Relevant targets: 13.1, 13.3; Relevant indicators: 13.1.1, 13.1.2, 13.1.3, 13.3.1, 13.3.2

² Relevant targets: 13.2, 13.b; Relevant indicators: 13.b.1

³ Relevant indicators: 13.3.2

⁴ <https://www.nanseninitiative.org/>