

24th Session of UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

Dedicated Consultation with Observers

Item 9: Leveraging key advances in building strong institutions and governance for climate action, focusing on clean energy transition.

**Statement by
Mr. Andrew Harper,
Special Advisor on Climate Action**

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Introduction

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Andrew Harper, and I am the Special Advisor on Climate Action to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Extreme heat is a **human crisis**. But it does not affect us all equally. **How you experience it depends on who you are and where you live** – and those who have been forced to flee their homes are particularly vulnerable. Imagine you are living under plastic sheeting in the desert, with limited access to water.

UNHCR recently released a report, together with partners, entitled “**No Escape: On the Frontlines of Climate Change, Conflict and Forced Displacement**”. As the report demonstrates, **75 per cent of forcibly displaced people live in countries with high-to-extreme exposure to climate-related hazards – including extreme heat.**

With Oregon State and Montana State universities, UNHCR is **analyzing trends in extreme heat exposure in refugee camps and settlements**, using the daily maximum heat index to understand current and future risks. These efforts aim to enhance preparedness and resilience for displaced populations.

Research shows that extreme heat, and its impacts on displaced people, are projected to rise significantly. For example, most **refugee settlements and camps are projected to experience twice as many days of dangerous heat by 2050.**

Commenting on the paper

Current protective measures fall short, and policies addressing extreme heat are often fragmented. As such, we welcome the expert paper shared with the group.

We agree with the need for **effective governance** for extreme heat, at all levels, and that governments would be well-advised to start **preparing** for extreme heat events as they do for hurricanes and severe storms.

As well as preparedness, we agree with the need for **sustainable solutions**, as mentioned in the recommendations, and that we need to work with **public and private sector** to achieve these. Now.

We also welcome the recognition of the fact that **vulnerable population groups** with less access to cooling, ventilation and water, face the **highest level of risk**, and should be prioritized in extreme heat policies and interventions, in order to leave no one behind.

But here we I will mention some **missing elements**. It is important that these **vulnerable populations** also include forcibly displaced people, who are often hosted on land that no one else wants, and have inadequate shelter conditions that do not provide any comfort during heat waves.

We would also like to see **women** included in the vulnerable groups, alongside children and older persons. Displaced women and girls often face higher protection risks due to existing roles, responsibilities and socio-cultural norms. Pregnant women are at particular risk from extreme heat. For an adequate response, we need to take age, gender and diversity factors into account.

And when discussing extreme heat, it's also important to account for **humidity**. This is where heat indices that combine temperature and humidity into one index are advantageous.

Lastly, we need **participatory approaches**. As the paper mentions, early warnings and climate services are vital to protect communities and economies. However, the sheer existence of early warning systems is not enough. We need to involve affected communities in the design and implementation of early warning systems. And we need to include displaced people in the relevant governance frameworks.

Thank you.