

*Chula Global Network Conference on:*

## **The Crisis Behind The Crisis**

### **Forced Migration and its Consequences as a Result of Environmental Change and Natural Disaster in ASEAN**

*15 December 2011*

*Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand*

Co-organized by

Chula Global Network

Center of Excellence on Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Master of Arts in International Development Studies, The Social Research Institute, Center of Peace and Conflict Studies, and Southeast Asia START Regional Center of Chulalongkorn University

The School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD) of Asian Institute of Technology

School of Environment of Brighton University

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies of Bonn University

#### Rationale

“Floods Kills 300 in Thailand, Cause Widespread Damage,” October 2011 ... “Indonesia Lifts Tsunami Warning After Quake Off Java,” April 2011 ... “Vietnam’s Rice Bowl Threatened by Rising Seas: Climate Change is Turning Rivers of Mekong Delta Salty, Spelling disaster for Millions of Poor Farmers,” August 2011. In 2011 alone, these headline-grabbing environmental disasters have caused massive impacts to peoples’ livelihoods throughout ASEAN, as have many more like them. Forest loss, soil degradation, and fish stock depletion, whilst less reported in the media, are equally serious and widespread and also creating growing challenges, especially for those who depend on the region’s natural resource base most directly for their livelihoods. Within these environmental crises, however, lies another potential crisis if left unrecognized, as natural disaster, long-term environmental degradation and climate change are increasingly significant drivers of migration throughout the ASEAN region that could threaten human security, exacerbate inequality, and create cross-border tensions. Despite this, environmentally-forced migration is little researched and poorly understood by academics, NGOs, policy-makers and decision-makers, and therefore its impacts and consequences remain largely unaddressed and appropriate policy solutions are yet to be fully developed.

In the ASEAN region regional integration is proceeding rapidly, accompanied by rising GDP, extensive industrialization, accelerating urbanization, a growing population, and changing lifestyles that are placing increasing pressures on the region’s natural resources and ecosystems with both local and regional consequences; infrastructure development, such as roads, dams mines, and power stations are fragmenting and polluting ecosystems, demand for arable land is causing deforestation and wetland destruction, and inappropriate marginal lands brought into

production are becoming irrecoverably degraded. The ASEAN region, furthermore, is both a growing emitter of green-house gases and also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, for example, are especially at risk from increasingly common typhoons and cyclones, and sea level rises are threatening key agricultural production areas such as the Mekong Delta, as well as urban settlements, for example Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City.

An emerging field of scholarship is investigating the connections between environmental change and migration. The International Organization on Migration defines an environmental migrant as: “*persons or groups of persons who, for compelling 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.*” Because migration is often considered to be driven by multiple social, political, economic *and* environmental factors that feedback upon each other, the concept of environmentally-driven migration itself is contested, especially with regard to whether environmental *refugees* exist - who would then be subject to protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Recent initial studies have identified several categories of environmental migrants:

- *Environmental emergency migrants*, who must flee the worst of an environmental impact on a temporary basis, for example from hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes
- *Environmentally forced migrants*, who have little choice but to migrate due to serious environmental deterioration, for example due to coastal erosion, sea-level rise, or soil degradation
- *Environmentally motivated migrants*, who make a decision to migrate due to a steadily deteriorating environment in order to pre-empt worsening environmental degradation that is foreseen in the future

Whether migration is permanent or temporary depends on whether adaption is possible and desirable, and whether the environment can recover.

As natural and human-induced environmental disasters and environmental change appears to be becoming more severe and regular, the extent and consequences of associated people migrations will grow. Failure to address the causes of this environmental change, as well as to adapt to it and account for these migrations could undermine the significant development achievements within ASEAN to date and even cause conflict within the region. Through synthesizing the experience and case studies of the conference participants, this seminar seeks to identify the extent to which the environmental crisis is driving migration in the ASEAN region, and to offer recommendations on policy responses to ensure that future risk is minimized and regional development in ASEAN is sustainable and fair.

As ASEAN regional integration deepens, the “Crisis Behind the Crisis” seminar and research planning workshop contributes towards Chula Global Network’s “Chula ASEAN Initiative.” Drawing on the insights gained and policy solutions proposed during the seminar, a half-day research planning workshop on December 16<sup>th</sup> will identify research priorities and seek to initiate collaborative a research partnership amongst interested participants. In addition, selected

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papers from the seminar will be compiled into an edited publication. The seminar and research planning workshop take place one day before International Migrants Day on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

### Objectives

The objectives of this international seminar are:

- To summarize the current state of knowledge on migration trends and their links to natural and human-induced disasters, climate change and long-term environmental degradation in ASEAN.
- To collect case studies from within ASEAN that exemplify the various dimensions of the environmental change-migration nexus, and to critically examine whether existing migration theory is adequate to explain the emerging trends
- To identify appropriate policy responses to resolve the environmental change-migration nexus, and to build awareness amongst policy makers and the public about how environmental change is shaping migration patterns within ASEAN
- To identifying knowledge gaps and research needs on the environmental change-migration nexus, and support networking of academics, NGOs and policy makers to form collaborative projects to fill these gaps

### Expected Outcomes

- A high-profile one-day international seminar held on Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup> for approximately 200 participants attended by scholars, the media, policy makers and the public that will explore the key issues of the environmental change-migration nexus in ASEAN, identify knowledge gaps and research needs, and offer initial policy recommendations for decision-makers.
- A half day working group meeting held on Friday December 16<sup>th</sup> to build a collaborative partnership across universities within ASEAN and beyond to develop a research project based on the knowledge gaps and research needs identified in the international seminar
- An edited high-quality publication compiling selected papers and key findings of the conference

*Seminar Agenda*

**The Crisis Behind The Crisis?**

**Forced Migration as a Consequence of Environmental Change  
and Natural Disaster in ASEAN**

9:00 – 9:15 - Opening

Welcome Remarks

Prof. Pirom Kamolratanakul, M.D., Chulalongkorn University President  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond, Director of Institute of Asian Studies,  
Chulalongkorn University

Master of Ceremony Dr. Rashan Meesri, Asian Studies Institute

9:15 – 10:30 Session 1: Keynote Perspectives on the Environment-Migration Nexus in ASEAN

Moderator: Asst. Prof. Surat Horachaikul

“Environmental change and population movement in ASEAN”

Prof. Philip Hirsch, University of Sydney

“Regional Migration in ASEAN: Types of Migrants and Possible Links to Environment”

Jerry Huguet, Independent Expert

“Theorizing the Environment-Migration Nexus”

Dr. Rebecca Elmhirst, Brighton University

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 12:30 Session 2: Panel Discussion “Forced Migration and Environmental Change in ASEAN: Emerging Evidence”

Chairperson: *To be confirmed*

Climate Change and Migration

Dr. Louis Lebel, Chiang Mai University

Reversed Nexus: Migration and Environmental Change in the Palm Oil Industry

Dr. Oliver Pye, Bonn University

Hazards, Migration and Gender in Low Elevation Coastal Zones of the Philippines

Asst. Prof. Dr. Bernadette P Resurreccion (AIT)

Natural Disasters and the Protection of Refugees

Maria Corinna Miguel-Quicho, UNHRC

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 -15:30: Parallel Sessions

*Session I: Environment Degradation and Migration*

Chairperson: Assoc. Prof. Vira Somboon (t.b.c.)

Ethnic Mogan and forced displacement  
Dr. Narumon Arunotai, CUSRI

*Topic to be confirmed*

*Speaker to be confirmed*

Environmental change and Migration in Chiang Khong, Northern Thailand

Dr. Jakkrit Sangkhamanee, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn  
University

Fisheries, Livelihoods and Migration around Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia

Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon and Dr. Carl Middleton, MAIDS, Chulalongkorn  
University

Discussants: Dr. Supichai Tangjaitrong, Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University  
Gabrielle Rosales Iglesias, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. (ADPC)

*Session II: Development Projects and Migration*

Chair person: Asst. Prof. Dr. Charit Tingsabadh, European Studies, Chulalongkorn University

Klity Lead Mining and Migration

Ms. Passanan Assavarak (EDS, Chulalongkorn University)

Hydropower Development on the Sesan River, Vietnam, and its downstream  
consequences in Cambodia

Ame Trandem, International Rivers

Development, Environment and Migration in Lao PDR

*Speaker to be confirmed*

Dawei Industrial Development Project, in Myanmar and Future Possible Migration.

Ukrit Pattamanand, Senior Researcher Institute of Asian Studies  
Chulalongkorn University.

Discussants: Dr. Pitch Pongsawat (t.b.c.)  
Prof. Philip Hirsch, University of Sydney

*Session III: Natural Disasters and Migration*

Chair person: Asst. Prof. Dr. Niyada Kiatying-Angsul, Director of Social Research Institute,  
Chulalongkorn University

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Living with the flood in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Olivia Dun, University of Sydney

Flashfloods and Migration in Thailand, 2011

*Speaker to be confirmed*

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the Rehabilitation Policy of the Thai Government

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suwattana Tadaniti. (CUSRI)

Forced Migration after Padang earthquake 2009

Dr. Rudi Febriamansyah and Muhammad Reza, Andalas University, Indonesia

Discussants: Asst. Prof. Dr. Bernadette Resurrccion  
Dr. Rebecca Elmhirst, Brighton University

15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break

15:45 – 17:00 Final Plenary

Moderator: Prof. Surichai Wun'gao, Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies,  
Chulalongkorn University

Regional Policy Gap in Environment and Migration

Brian Kelly, IOM

Environment Induced Conflict Situations and Migration

Dr. Vitoon Viriyasakultorn, Mekong River Commission

Civil Society in Emergency Situation and Conflicts

Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon, MAIDS, Chulalongkorn University

Identifying Research Gaps and Setting a Research Agenda in Environment and Migration  
in ASEAN

Prof. Supang Chantavanich ARCM-CE, Chulalongkorn University

17:00 – 17:30 Closing Keynote

Regional Agenda for Disaster Management and Human Displacement

*Speaker to be confirmed*

Evening: Reception Event and Performance at Ruen Chula Naruemitr