

U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry
Statement at 114th Session of IOM Council
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Thank you very much to the International Organization for Migration, for inviting me to share a few thoughts with you today. And I'm sorry that I wasn't able to be there in person, but I'm glad to be able to come in virtually.

We all know that the climate crisis is perhaps the greatest challenge that the world faces today. And I know some of you may say, well, how can that be with the active war in Ukraine or the events in the Middle East? But the fact is that this is a crisis unfolding with scientific precision in ways that we know and understand. And it is unfolding with regularity and the evidence that we see from Mother Nature about what is happening. The science is clear on the need to act and the need to act now.

There's also no question that the impacts of the climate crisis are already with us. We can see it all around the planet and feel it. The climate crisis is reducing economic growth in various places. It upends livelihoods. It threatens water and food security, compromises health. It exacerbates violence and conflict. And increasingly, it is contributing to historic levels of migration and displacement. We also lose more than seven million people every single year due to the lack of the quality of air that comes from the pollutants and super pollutants that are going into the atmosphere.

I ask you, my friends, to think of the millions of people who too often have to leave their homes, even, their countries, after increasing disasters, the children crossing the sea in rafts and the parents forced to explain a family's newfound reality. Think of the impacts this crisis is having on women and girls in many parts of the world who too often are living in extreme situations, having to go further and further from their home to find water for their families or the fuel for their fire and facing greater risks of violence. This is an enormous challenge that we see ahead of us.

Mounting evidence tells us that the climate crisis is reshaping life as we know it. Increasingly, it's placing historic levels of both migration and displacement on the table of every government in the world.

We know what we need to do. On one hand, we're working hard to raise global ambition to keep the warming of the Earth's temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and we need to keep that at least within reach. At the same time, we're working to accelerate adaptation efforts through the President's, President Biden's, emergency plan for action, PREPARE, as it's known. It's a program to adapt to climate related impacts. The PREPARE program builds on existing efforts and commitments, and it advances ways to address key drivers of migration and to respond to displacement.

I want you to know the United States is not just talking about this issue. We're taking the crisis and its nexus to migration very seriously, and we're taking action. In 2021, the White House released a groundbreaking report on the climate crisis and on human mobility that comes from it. And that report looked at the rise in internal and cross-border climate migration for the first time. Last fall, the United States became a major contributor to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund in order to support programs focused on migrants impacted by the climate crisis. In June, the Department of State released its first strategy to address the impacts of the crisis on migration and displacement. In September, at the Africa Climate Summit, I was able to announce that the United States is making a \$4 million contribution to a new program in order to get that program off the ground and to do this with IOM in order to support migrants, refugees, and host communities in Kenya facing the growing impacts of the climate crisis.

Most recently, the United States made a groundbreaking announcement on the topic of sea level rise, which we know is one of the biggest threats facing people's lives and homes in coastal areas. For some states, particularly low-lying island states in the Pacific Ocean, increasing sea levels pose an existential threat. During the U.S. Pacific Island Forum Summit, President Biden announced that the United States considers that sea level rise, driven by human-induced climate change, could not cause any country to lose its statehood or its membership in the United Nations or other international organizations. We are committed to working with low-lying island states and others on issues relating to sea level rise and statehood so that we can advance the objectives that I just described.

This, my friends, is the beginning of the work that we must do. We can do it if we work together. It's a global crisis. It will only be solved through global action. And the United States remains committed to promoting safe, orderly, and humane migration management around the world. That is also an essential part

of the aspirations of people all around this planet. So, thank you. Thank you for the work you're doing and thank you for what we're all going to do together.