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## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM FOUNDATION

### **“The Crisis Behind the Crisis?” Forced Migration and its Consequences as a Result of Environmental Change and Natural Disaster in ASEAN**

The Hdff team had the opportunity to attend the 2011 Chula Global Network Annual Conference at Chulalongkorn University. The conference explored the interchanging relationship between migration and the environment, with a focus on the varying influences on ASEAN nations’ human and spatial security. Through various experts, ranging from individual researchers to representatives from the UNHCR, the social science consortium highlighted the importance of how environmental changes could play a role in changing migration’s patterns, workers’ decisions and lifestyles, affecting long standing communities in both positive and negative ways. Although the analysts had diverse perspectives, all seemed to agree that the overall impact of how the environment will shape migration remains unknown. Reasons for migration range from fleeing from natural disasters to choosing to leave as a result of depletion of resources which inhabitants are dependent upon. Aside from natural disasters, researchers are hard pressed to find specific documentation and evidence which highlights the environment as a sole primary factor in the decision to leave home; however, environmental change can be understood as an increasingly relevant part of complex factors relating to migration.

Despite the challenges of isolating the environment as part of migration, there is a need to direct effective, preemptive policy and research. A thoroughly reviewed (and relevant) discussion was Thailand’s recent mass migrations, resulting from the 2011 flooding, and the need to better prepare for the future. Suggested solutions included creating incentives for citizens to move to safer locations and implement stricter zoning laws. Differing contexts also need to be reviewed, such as which migrants are being forced out of their locations versus which migrants are being forced into their locations. Historically, people adapted to deal with climate patterns, but the question that remains is, will changes overwhelm standard coping mechanisms, and what affect will that have? These types of questions were considered and debated at the conference, which the Hdff team had the pleasure to take part in.

Hdff is currently focusing on researching *“The social implications of climate change for land tenure and land policy - Case Studies from ASEAN, Germany and Europe and USA/NAFTA”*, supported by the Thai Research Fund. Hdff looks forward to implementing lessons learned from the conference into our working plan.