



Assessing the links between natural hazards and migration: the Livelihood connection in Egypt and Niger

K. Warner (1), T. Afifi (2)

United Nations University Institute of Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS),
Germany (warner@ehs.unu.edu / Fax: +49 228 815 0299)

This paper discusses the relationship between natural hazards and the decision to migrate in two African countries: Egypt and Niger. The paper hypothesizes that the mechanism through which environmental factors such as natural hazards affect the decision to migrate is the impact of hazards on livelihoods. Therefore, in ongoing scientific efforts to understand how environmental change affects societal phenomena such as migration, it is important to consider economic information such as labor market impacts. This paper examines two case studies in Egypt and Niger which were selected as part of the Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios project (EACH-FOR), funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Program. The case studies examine the vulnerability of communities to complex hazards and which have resulted in migration pressures. The paper compares the livelihood impacts of the natural hazards, and whether this impact contributes to migration trends in the countries.

The case studies employed a mixed methodology approach, combining econometric modeling to establish a general correlation between migration and environmental changes, expert interviews and migrant and non-migrant surveys in the two case studies, and examination of livelihood impacts in both areas. The findings of this paper are important for three reasons: First, by incorporating livelihood and vulnerability into the analysis, it is possible to reveal the mechanisms for decision making related to environmental pressures which can lead to migration. Second, by showing that envi-

ronmental hazards can affect migration, it is possible to improve the understanding of future potential migration pressures because the geographical location of many natural hazards is known as well as the livelihood structure of potentially affected areas. Finally, as climate change contributes to the growing frequency and intensity of natural hazards, possible preventive measures can be planned to reduce the impacts on livelihoods of these hazards and reduce the risk of people being forced to migrate.